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# THEME-BUILDING

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# THEME-BUILDING

BY

C. H. WARD

THE TAFT SCHOOL, WATERTOWN, CONNECTICUT  
AUTHOR OF "SENTENCE AND THEME,"  
"WHAT IS ENGLISH?" ETC.



SCOTT, FORESMAN AND COMPANY  
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*Prof. John F. Murray*

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## PREFACE

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For seventeen years I have taught a tenth-grade class that is an ideal proving-ground for methods in composition: most of the students have during the previous year been thoroughly trained in *Sentence and Theme* material, but some have had no such training; most of them come from high schools, in all parts of the country, and represent all varieties of English training; the class is required to cover in one year all the textbook work of the school course. Hence I have had to learn what topics produce small results and what methods are fruitful, which type of exercise wastes time and which must be extended. Each year I have seen more clearly that mere precept accomplishes little, that examples and exercises cause knowledge. From year to year there have been increasing desires for illustrative material to work with. I longed to build a book in which the text should be largely comment upon examples, and exercises should spread as far as publishers would allow. I have made such a book. If it is what I needed and searched for in the market, it must be what many other teachers need.

I have emphasized the personal element and the particular class upon which I kept my eye as I wrote, because there is a validity about such a process that will appeal to teachers who want a book based on actual practice. But the book has not been limited in scope to the needs of one teacher in one class, nor was the material obtained from one school. About two-thirds of the illustrative sentences, paragraphs, and themes were secured by reading several thousand themes from other schools. Moreover my own judgments were checked by detailed oral consultation with thirty experienced theme-readers from twelve states. So far as I know, *Theme-Building* is the only textbook that is based on such a foundation. No topic is treated simply

because it has ordinarily been included in previous books; all topics are emphasized in proportion to their observed commonness or usefulness.

The method of the text is to begin by calling attention to an example, then to another, and so to secure acquaintance with facts. A young person (or, for that matter, an older one) cannot enter upon new knowledge by the path of generalization; we must all know first what kind of facts are being talked about. A student can see the particular words by which Goldsmith conveys us from a conversation to a drowning daughter, and can by further study of particulars learn the ways of coherence.

Many teachers will grudge the space devoted to theme assignments; for they know that much of the so-called "constructive work" in texts is only ornamental, pretty suggestions of achievement, prodigally assigned by hundreds, though in an ordinary school not twenty can be required in a year. All such application work is of course sound in principle: if the year were 200 weeks long, we could secure 200 themes from each student. But in real life we are limited to mere human conditions. My excuse for presenting several hundred theme topics is that many teachers and students are stimulated by an array of goodly possibilities, and like to see a wealth of options.

Practice work for theme architecture must be more wide and varied than the efforts that each student makes in his own construction. There must be analysis of other people's work. We all know how true it is that a boy may learn better from an amusing example of error printed in a book than he does from his own theme in which a teacher has marked a similar error. I have always known that I could do better work in much shorter time if only I could have more themes for analysis as exercise material. These furnish "constructive" work in my class.

It is needless to set forth a catalogue of what I needed and have here provided. I will mention only one more instance of the ways in which this book grew out of real life and conforms

to it—the treatment of metaphors. Very few young people have any conception of the nature of a figure of speech, yet textbooks make only brief and perfunctory explanation. The books then wave the subject aloft as a literary matter, and there it floats out of reach. I have tried to make the subject alive by copious illustration; when it is understood, it appears as a common necessity of everyday writing.

To me one of the most useful parts of the book is the Appendix. No more am I driven to a review in *Sentence and Theme*; no longer am I helpless when a forgetful boy “doesn’t know.” All the mechanics are available for him at any minute in handy, compact, yet complete form. The old-time spelling truths are there for instant reference. When we need grammar review, we are not obliged to go through familiar text and half-remembered sentences; here are new pages suitable to the needs of the new year. Punctuation is not a revisiting of last year’s scenes, but a new display of the old requirements. The grouping of the punctuation rules in order of decreasing importance is an arrangement that ought to prove as valuable as it is novel. It is a device for reviewing without loss of time and for applying the review as themes are written. A teacher can announce that in the first theme of the year the class will be held responsible for the first five rules (or more); these and the next five are required for the second theme; and so on. By thus concentrating on a few matters at a time a class advances confidently, and a teacher is saving the nerves and the blue pencil.

I could not have believed that my personal methods would fit many other teachers’ needs if it had not been for the welcome given to *Sentence and Theme*. That experience gives ground for hope that this second book, another transcript of the facts of one classroom, will fit in other schools.

I am grateful to G. P. Putnam’s Sons for permission to use Jack London’s sketch, “Stranger than Fiction,” the passage from George Kennan’s *Tent-Life in Siberia*, two passages from Roosevelt’s *American Ideals and Other Essays*, and

two extracts from editorials in the *Critic* and *Putnam's Monthly*; to the Century Company for the extract from *The Strenuous Life* by Theodore Roosevelt; to Ginn and Company for the quotation from Keller and Bishop's *Industry and Trade* and the extract from Sir Robert Ball's *Star-land*; to the Yale Press for the selection from W. G. Sumner's *War and Other Essays* and for the selection from *The Forgotten Man*; to A. C. McClurg and Company for the selection from A. J. Patterson's *The Spinner Family*; to Doubleday, Page and Company for the passage from W. C. VanAntwerp's *The Stock Exchange from Within*; to the Harvard University Press for the passage from R. W. Brown's *How the French Boy Learns to Write*; to the Fleming H. Revell Company for the paragraphs from *Down North on the Labrador*; to The Baker and Taylor Company for the selection from A. W. North's *Camp and Camino in Lower California*.

C. H. WARD.

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## "THEY OUGHT TO TEACH US COMPOSITION"

*(A Prologue for Every Lesson)*

"They ought to have taught me more composition in school," said an engineer to a manufacturer and a journalist. "A man cannot succeed in my profession unless he has had more than mere technical training; he can never forge ahead unless he knows how to put ideas on paper and how to put ideas into words when he stands on his feet before people. The biggest asset of an engineer is an ability in composition."

"It's the same in my business," said the manufacturer. "The man who cannot express himself is lost. If my two boys can learn to write clearly and to speak to the point, I shall say that they have the right preparation for life."

The journalist was surprised. "This is a new idea to me, gentlemen. Would you really advise boys and girls in school that composition is of such great practical importance? That hardly sounds like real life to me. Do you mean exactly what you say?"

"We do," they replied. And the engineer added: "I have seen many a case of a person with real abilities who never could advance because he had had no training in expressing himself. I am not theorizing. I know. The schools ought to teach more composition, and they ought to show boys and girls how important the subject is."

Similar evidence could be gathered from all kinds of practical men everywhere. There is need of young people who can write and speak their thoughts, who can convey a message concisely and courteously in a letter, who can stand at a desk and state a purpose in an orderly series of sentences that arrive at a conclusion. Some ability to write and speak is a requisite for success.

A book can do something toward cultivating this ability; a teacher can do more; but both book and teacher will be powerless unless the student has faith that every exercise will help *to fit him for life*. If he doubts whether "the opening situation" of a story has anything to do with securing him a job, if he is indifferent to linking written paragraphs because he does not see how that will enable him to talk better, he will not acquire the art that schools can teach to those who work faithfully. A valuable ability is never acquired easily, by some short cut, or by one form of exercise. The art of speaking and writing effectively can be learned only by long practice, of many kinds, with varied materials.

Oral composition cannot be learned best by mere practice in speaking. The principles that underlie oral work are often better shown by exercises in writing; and it often happens that the test of "how you would say it" gives the clue to the best way of writing it. A book can often be more useful if it explains how to put thoughts on paper; but the experience thus gained by the student can be applied, in similar ways and for similar reasons, to the expression of thoughts with his tongue. Oral English is not a different subject from written English; it is the same set of principles applied to our speaking. The alert student will always realize that what he learns about writing is true for speaking. In the classroom he will have constant opportunity to cultivate—what no book or teacher can force upon him—the power to say what is in his mind.

# PART ONE \*

## PLANNING THE COMPOSITION

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### CHAPTER I

#### THE STRAIGHT LINE

##### A. THE STRAIGHT LINE IN NARRATIVE

All teachers of composition agree that the most important requirement of good structure is *steady progress from point to point*. The reader ought to pass readily from the idea in the first sentence to the idea in the second, and from that to the third, through the paragraph; then he ought to find his course straight and easy to the second paragraph, and through that to the third. At every point he ought to have the feeling that he is getting forward by orderly steps to a conclusion. To call this progress a "straight line" may not be the best figure of speech for every composition; because in story-telling we may have to go back to take up something that had happened previously, or a description may sometimes swing a circle to the point from which we started. But in most cases the advance through a good theme is a straight line in order of events or in place or in successive reasons. And in all good writing the reader's sensation is that he is being taken steadily forward by a writer who knows where he is going.

This chapter will show some illustrations of how professional authors kept a direct course. In the first one Parkman had the difficult task of (1) bringing one set of actors on to his stage,

---

\* "Workways," a handy manual of comment by the author, of some of the ways for doing the best work with *Theme-Building*, will be sent upon request to teachers who are using the book.



(2) then another set of actors, (3) then picturing the result. He was deeply concerned not to have any "jolts" or "hitches" in his pages; he devised a regular progress in a narrative form. (The reader has just been told about the advance of Braddock's army through the wilderness to a point not far from Fort Duquesne.)

1. Scouts and Indian runners had brought the tidings of Braddock's approach to the French at Fort Duquesne. Their dismay was great, and Contrecoeur, the commander, thought only of retreat, when Beaujeu, a captain in the garrison, made a bold proposal of leading out a party of French and Indians to waylay the English in the woods, and harass or interrupt their march. The offer was accepted, and Beaujeu hastened to the Indian camps.

2. . . . Beaujeu called the warriors together, flung a hatchet on the ground before them, and invited them to follow him out to battle. . . . His daring proved contagious; and when, on the morning of the ninth of July, a scout ran in with the news that the English army was but a few miles distant, the Indian camps were at once astir with the turmoil of preparation. Chiefs harangued their yelling followers; braves bedaubed themselves with war-paint, smeared themselves with grease, hung feathers in their scalp-locks, and whooped and stamped till they had wrought themselves into a delirium of valor.

3. That morning James Smith, an English prisoner, stood on the rampart and saw the half-frenzied multitude thronging about the gateway, where kegs of bullets and gunpowder were broken open, that each might help himself at will. Then band after band hastened away toward the forest, followed and supported by nearly two hundred and fifty French and Canadians, commanded by Beaujeu. . . . At about nine miles from the fort they reached a spot where the narrow road descended to the river through deep and gloomy woods, and where two ravines, concealed by trees and bushes, seemed formed by nature for an ambushade. Beaujeu well knew the ground; and it was here that he had resolved to fight; but he and his followers were well nigh too late; for as they neared the ravines, the woods were resounding with the roll of British drums.

4. . . . The scarlet columns of the British regulars, complete in martial appointment, the rude backwoodsmen with shouldered rifles, the trains of artillery and white-topped wagons moved on in long procession through the shallow current and slowly mounted the opposing bank. Men were there whose names have become historic: Gage, who, twenty years later, saw his routed battalions recoil in disorder from the breastwork on Bunker Hill; Gates, the future conqueror

of Burgoyne; and one destined to a higher fame—George Washington, a boy in years, a man in calm thought and self-ruling wisdom. . . .

5. Several engineers and guides and six light horsemen led the way; a body of grenadiers under Gage was close behind; and the army followed in such order as the rough ground would permit, along a narrow road, twelve feet wide, tunneled through the dense and matted foliage. There were flanking parties on either side, but no scouts to scour the woods in front, and with an insane confidence Braddock pressed on to meet his fate. The van had passed the low grounds that bordered the river, and were now ascending a gently rising ground, where, on either hand, hidden by thick trees, by tangled undergrowth and rank grasses, lay the two fatal ravines. Suddenly Gordon, an engineer in advance, saw the French and Indians bounding forward through the forest and along the narrow track, Beaujeu leading them on, dressed in a fringed hunting shirt, and wearing a silver gorget on his breast. He stopped, turned, and waved his hat, and his French followers, crowding across the road, opened a murderous fire upon the head of the British column, while, screeching their war-cries, the Indians thronged into the ravines, or crouched behind rocks and trees on both flanks of the advancing troops. . . . In a few moments all was confusion. The advance guard fell back on the main body, and every trace of subordination vanished. . . . The officers, for the most part, displayed a conspicuous gallantry; but threats and commands were wasted alike on the panic-stricken multitude. . . . Of eighty-six officers only twenty-three remained unhurt; and of twelve hundred soldiers who crossed the Monongahela more than seven hundred were killed and wounded.

Francis Parkman, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* \*

Such a spirited narrative seems to tell itself; it is so carefully contrived that we may fail to notice any contrivance. But go through the selection again, observing the "straight line." In the first paragraph each item of the narrative is one step forward in time: (1) bringing the news, (2) dismay caused by the news, (3) Beaujeu's plan, (4) acceptance of the plan, (5) beginning to carry out the plan. Through the succeeding paragraphs we have the same straight line in time: (6) Indians called together, (7) persuaded, (8) in a delirium of valor, (9) supplied with ammunition, (10) hastening to the ambushade, and so on. In another way we feel that we are being carried "right on" to

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\* Copyright by Little, Brown and Company.

a conclusion: the successive places are clearly indicated. In the first paragraph we hear of "tidings at Fort Duquesne," of "a captain" there. Then the captain "hastened to the Indian camps"; the scene is now unmistakably among these warriors; a scout "runs in" among them; the "camps are astir"; the braves "whoop and stamp." Next we "stand on the rampart" of the Fort and see the savages "thronging about the gateway"; we go along with the force of Indians and French for "nine miles" to a ford in the "deep and gloomy woods"; we "near these ravines" with the Indians and see them hide themselves just as the British are heard approaching *the place where we now are*. Parkman does not run about the landscape, whisking his confused readers from scene to scene; he takes us steadily from the Fort and its surrounding camps of Indians through the woods to the river-crossing, where the tragedy is to be enacted. At this place we can see the British army approaching, the strange assortment of fighters, the famous men commanding them; we first see in paragraph five those who are "leading the way" toward us; we see down the long line that moves toward us on the "tunneled" road; the van comes up to this ford where we are; an "engineer in advance" catches the first glimpse of the men in ambush; a murderous fire is opened upon this "head of the British column"; this advance guard "falls back on the main body"; then the whole huddled British force is in confusion; the fearful slaughter follows. A page could be used to show in greater detail what pains Parkman took to arrange his events and places in such a line of progress that he carries a reader on easily to the objective.

A few apparent exceptions are worth comment. (1) In this incomplete fragment of a long chapter we do not have any picture of where the Indian camps are, and hence we do not see where Beaujeu is hastening. For the same reason we feel a "jolt" at the beginning of the third paragraph; "on the rampart" may seem part of the Indian camp, and we have to read on before we learn that the scene has changed. There would be no such misunderstanding if we were reading the whole chap-

ter, because there the mere word "rampart" would be so familiar that it would take us at once to the Fort. (2) In the last sentence of the third paragraph a previous time is suggested by Beaujeu's "knowing the ground and resolving to fight"; but this is only a kind of introductory or modifying statement, equivalent to "in spite of his careful planning"; our attention is all kept upon "this time when they are nearly too late." (3) In the fourth paragraph we look forward to the future fame of three leaders. Notice how careful Parkman is to show that this is simply a moment of historic sight-seeing "twenty years later," how he comes back in Washington's case to "the boy" as he now is, and how the whole emphasis is upon the notables that are now here at the ford.

#### B. THE STRAIGHT LINE IN ALL COMPOSITION

The "straight line" principle is shown in a striking passage of *Robinson Crusoe*: step by step, as we get farther away from the fearful discovery of a single footprint in the sand, we feel the increasing fear that possessed Crusoe.

##### The Footprint

It happened one day about noon, going toward my boat, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen in the sand. I stood like one thunderstruck, or as if I had seen an apparition. I listened, I looked round me; I could hear nothing, nor see anything. I went up to a rising ground to look farther; I went up the shore and down the shore, but it was all one; I could see no other impression but that one. I went to it again to see if there were any more, and to observe if it might not be my fancy; but there was no room for that, for there was exactly the very print of a foot—toes, heel, and every part of a foot. How it came thither I knew not, nor could in the least imagine.

After innumerable fluttering thoughts, like a man perfectly confused and out of myself, I came home to my fortification, not feeling, as we say, the ground I went on, but terrified to the last degree, looking behind me at every two or three steps, mistaking every bush and tree, and fancying every stump at a distance to be a man. Nor is it possible to describe how many various shapes affrighted imagination

represented things to me in, how many wild ideas were found every moment in my fancy, and what strange, unaccountable whimsies came into my thoughts by the way.

When I came to my castle, for so I think I called it ever after this, I fled into it like one pursued; whether I went over by the ladder, as first contrived, or went in at the hole in the rock, which I called a door, I cannot remember. No, nor could I remember the next morning; for never frightened hare fled to cover, or fox to earth, with more terror of mind than I to this retreat.

I slept none that night. The farther I was from the occasion of my fright, the greater my apprehensions were, which is something contrary to the nature of such things, and especially to the usual practice of all creatures in fear; but I was so embarrassed with my own frightful ideas of the thing that I formed nothing but dismal imaginations to myself, even though I was now a great way off from it. Sometimes I fancied it must be the devil.

The student should remind himself that the passage from *Robinson Crusoe* is not exciting because of its exciting subject. When Defoe sat at his table writing, this sequence of increasing emotions did not flow of itself from pen to paper; Defoe's mind went on a dozen different excursions, was attracted to many possibilities, probably started several times to "back-track" in the sentences he was composing. But Defoe kept his reader in mind, kept planning a forward-marching train of doings and feelings: (1) I stood thunderstruck; (2) I looked everywhere about the place; (3) I ran from that place toward home, terrified all the way by a frightened imagination; (4) the next morning I couldn't even tell how I got into my castle; (5) I couldn't sleep the following night; (6) as time passed, the more terrible my dismal imaginations became; (7) I wondered if the footprint might have been made by the devil.

As the student reads the following paragraph, he should consider that the easy progress through the four sentences is not an accident. Boswell is explaining the style in Dr. Johnson's essays, called *The Rambler*. The first sentence makes a surprising statement of fact; the second sentence contains three items of explanation of the astonishing fact; the third tells us

that Reynolds once inquired about *that third item which we*

*have just read*; and the fourth gives Johnson's answer to the inquiry.

### Johnson's Constant Practice

(1) Posterity will be astonished when they are told, upon the authority of Johnson himself, that many of these discourses, which we should suppose had been labored with all the slow attention of literary leisure, were written in haste as the moment pressed, without even being read over by him before they were printed. (2) It can be accounted for only in this way: that by reading and meditation and a very close inspection of life he had accumulated a great fund of miscellaneous knowledge, which, by a peculiar promptitude of mind, was ever ready at his call, and which he had constantly accustomed himself to clothe in the most apt and energetic expression. (3) Sir Joshua Reynolds once asked him by what means he had attained his extraordinary accuracy and flow of language. (4) He told him that he had early laid it down as a fixed rule to do his best on every occasion and in every company; to impart whatever he knew in the most forcible language he could put it in; and that by constant practice, and never suffering any careless expressions to escape him, or attempting to deliver his thoughts without arranging them in the clearest manner, it became habitual to him.

Johnson's ability was achieved only "by constant practice in arranging his thoughts in the clearest manner." Everyone who succeeds in oral composition puts himself through a similar training. Every writer must do the same. When Whittier wished to pay a tribute to Conductor Bradley, he had no poetical license to ramble in meter; he was under the necessity of planning a sequence of thoughts. However far he might wing his flight above the dull world of prose, he had first to chart his course: the first four stanzas recount what happened in the train wreck; the fifth and sixth exclaim about the nobility of Bradley's dying words; the seventh and eighth tell the success of those words—of how he could save the lives of a whole train-load of people, though he could not save himself; the last two stanzas take up that idea of "could not save himself" and show how truly he is alive, "in his record," to humble us and teach us how to live.

## THEME-BUILDING

## Conductor Bradley

Conductor Bradley (always may his name  
Be said with reverence!), as the swift doom came,  
Smitten to death, a crushed and mangled frame,

Sank, with the brake he grasped, just where he stood  
To do the utmost that a brave man could,  
And die, if needful, as a true man should.

Men stooped above him; women dropped their tears  
On that poor wreck beyond all hopes or fears,  
Lost in the strength and glory of his years.

What heard they? Lo! the ghastly lips of pain,  
Dead to all thought save duty's, moved again:  
"Put out the signals for the other train!"

No nobler utterance since the world began  
From lips of saint or martyr ever ran,  
Electric, through the sympathies of man.

Ah me! how poor and noteless seem to this  
The sick-bed dramas of self-consciousness,  
Our sensual fears of pain and hopes of bliss!

Oh, grand, supreme endeavor! Not in vain  
That last brave act of failing tongue and brain!  
Freighted with life the downward rushing train,

Following the wrecked one, as wave follows wave,  
Obeyed the warning which the dead lips gave.  
Others he saved; himself he could not save.

Nay, the lost life *was* saved. He is not dead  
Who in his record still the earth shall tread  
With God's clear aureole shining round his head.

We bow as in the dust, with all our pride  
Of virtue dwarfed the noble deed beside.  
And give us grace to live as Bradley died!

Every poem must be planned to present a series of pictures or ideas or feelings in some orderly course of beauty. If a poet did not follow such a line of development, he would be like an architect trying to erect a beautiful building without any girders. Even those compositions that we call "careless bits of song" are framed upon a logical sequence. When Burns, for example, sang of how "I love my Jean," he started in the distant west where she was; he said that of all the directions the wind can blow he liked the west, because that was where Jean lived; though there were many rivers and hills between them, his fancy could always fly to Jean; his fancy was stirred by everything about him; not a bonnie flower or bird but put him in mind of Jean.

### My Jean

Of a' the airts the wind can blow,  
 I dearly like the west,  
 For there the bonnie lassie lives,  
 The lassie I lo'e best.  
 There wild woods grow, and rivers row,  
 And monie a hill between;  
 But day and night my fancy's flight  
 Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,  
 I see her sweet and fair;  
 I hear her in the tunefu' birds,  
 I hear her charm the air.  
 There's not a bonnie flower that springs  
 By fountain, shaw, or green,  
 There's not a bonnie bird that sings,  
 But minds me o' my Jean.

Turn from this little paradise of loving fancy to one of the grimmest passages that can be found in a library and observe how from sentence to sentence you are led forward in one un-deviating path of logic.

### War Will Always Exist

In the struggle for existence a man is wrestling with nature to extort from her the means of subsistence. When two men are striv-



ing side by side in the struggle for existence, they come into rivalry, and a collision of interest takes place. This collision may be light and unimportant, if the supplies are large and the number of men small; or it may be harsh and violent, if there are many men striving for a small supply. This collision we call the competition of life. The greater or less intensity of the competition of life is a fundamental condition of human existence, and the competition arises between those ultimate unit-groups which I have described. The members of the unit-group work together. The Australian hunter goes abroad to seek meat food, while the woman stays by the fire at a trysting place, with the children, and collects plant food. They cooperate in the struggle for existence, and the size of the group is fixed by the number who can work together to the greatest advantage under their mode of life. Such a group, therefore, has a common interest. It must have control of a certain area of land; hence it comes into collision of interest with every other group. The competition of life, therefore, arises between groups, not between individuals; and we see that the members of the "in-group" are allies and joint partners in one interest, while they are brought into antagonism of interest with all outsiders. It is the competition of life, therefore, which makes war, and that is why war always has existed and always will exist. It is in the conditions of human existence.

William Graham Sumner, *War and Other Essays*

Of course, we may not believe this reasoning; we may know the answer. But that is not our concern in this lesson. Here we are making note of the straight line of development: (1) What the struggle for existence is; (2) two side-by-side struggles for existence mean rivalry—that is, competition; (3) this competition is between *groups* of people; (4) it causes antagonism—that is, war; (5) therefore (since competition must always exist) war must always exist. Any student who will for himself observe carefully how each forward step is made in this passage, how each statement moves straight on from the previous statement, will be less likely during the rest of his life to wander or plunge backward in his own writing.

All of us are continually being required to explain or to state facts or to persuade; and, whether we are philosophers or writers of business letters, we shall fail unless we can follow a straight line through what we say. That ability is the first and

greatest demand that the world makes of educated people. To be wavering and crooked in speech or writing is to show unfitness for advancement; to "think straight" is to gain the best commendation a high-school graduate can have.

### EXERCISES

Copious assignments for oral and written composition are given in the exercises of the following chapters. The best preliminary exercise for keeping a straight line in oral composition is to see clearly what the straight line means in written themes. As you analyze the mistakes of school writers in these exercises, have in mind that the work will be directly helpful in oral composition throughout the year. Dr. Johnson, we have seen, did not distinguish his drill in writing from his drill in speaking. Everyone who is striving for self-improvement should make one kind of training supplement the other kind.

State definitely at what points and in what ways the following paragraphs fail to keep a straight line of development. (These were all written just as they stand—except for some errors in spelling and punctuation—by tenth or eleventh-grade students.) Write definite criticism of each theme, saying at what points it fails to follow a straight line—thus: "Near the end of the first paragraph the writer leaps suddenly from *the pleasures of a breakfast in a dining-car* to *that milky sediment in the glass of water.*" Pay no attention to bad taste in the use of words; criticize only the general sequence.

1. The author of the *New England Primer* is unknown. But it was published in Boston at a very early date. What the original Pilgrim children read is unknown, for this was published after they had been grown up some time. The Primer itself consisted of an alphabet in rime, many combinations of two letters, and, finally, or some hard words. *Abomination* is the one mentioned in the text. This book was used extensively for at least a century after its publication. It was considered a necessary adjunct to a child's education.

2. There is nothing that brings out a boy's real merit so strongly as a small amount of hard work. It teaches him to obey his master;

he must follow instructions, or he is discharged. He learns that he may not leave his job when the monotony begins, but must see the matter through. The boy gets a strong body that will serve him all his life. Farm work develops stronger men than most occupations. Working in an office is fine training for the mind, but the stuffy hot air is likely to do more harm than good to his health. On a farm the boy works from sunrise till sunset in the open air.

3. Mr. Hardcastle was training servants to receive Mr. Hastings and Mr. Marlow. He told them not to laugh out loud when he told a story, and not to act as though they were a part of the company. He asked them what they would do if someone asked for some wine, but no one of the servants replied. When he asked the reason for this stupidity, they replied that he had told them to remain in the positions they were and not to move. Most of these servants had been taken from the plow.

4. The happiest hours of a boy's life are those spent at the soda fountain. To see a group of ten or twelve boys, laughing and singing, is a pleasure to anyone. On rainy days, when everyone else is gloomy, the schoolboy goes to the soda-fountain. The merriment of the group defies the weather outside. The laughing is not caused by cheap jokes which entertain the crowd on the street corners. Clean jokes and clean fun crowd out all evil things. The clean-minded fellow becomes a member of the group, but the other kind is pushed aside. Just as the post office is to the bum of the streets, so the soda-fountain is to the schoolboy. Many boys think that it is manly to hang around the post office of the town, but one may easily discover that the leaders of the school make up the group around the soda fountain.

5. A prairie stretches from eastern Kansas to the foothills of the Rockies, and from the middle of Canada down to the Gulf of Mexico. The dreary, never-ending, undulating hills of the Kansas and Colorado plains were never told of better than by Parkman in his book, *The Oregon Trail*. But having lived there all my life, I can well understand how this seemingly desert stretch of country interests few, especially those from the city. In traveling for days no one can see anything but this never-ending sea of brownish vegetation. But if the ground is closely examined, there will be seen innumerable species of prairie life: before all is seen the underground home of the fast-disappearing prairie-dog; snakes also inhabit the bleak country. Since the country is so uninteresting, there can be but little to write about it.

If one should go through the country today, he would find it one of the most interesting stretches of country, because farmers have irrigated the prairies and turned them into gardens and enormous large-producing farms, which today supply the country with food.

6. Once, after reading a novel of English life, Cooper exclaimed that he could write a better novel than that. The result of his work was *Precaution*. Unless the English novel was very poor, Cooper's wasn't much of an improvement, as his was very dull. Another fault with it was that its characters weren't true to life, as the setting was in England and the characters English. As Cooper had never been to England, he knew nothing of the English people and their customs. Most people thought the book was written by an Englishman, so Cooper escaped a very severe criticism.

7. After Emerson's return from abroad he began lecturing. The people were now willing to listen to what the greatest thinkers of the world had to say. Emerson tried to interpret what he had learned into a language that all could understand. He held all people as equals. A woman once came up to him and said that she did not understand his lectures, but liked to see him look as if everybody was as good as he. Emerson's message in all his lectures, especially the one on *The American Scholar*, was that we should think our own thoughts and speak our own minds.

### 8. The Art of Advertising

Probably the most looked-at and therefore most efficient advertising is in the New York subways, but to a lesser degree this mode of advertising in the cars holds true to be the most popular all over the country. The reason for this probably is that people in the cars, not wishing to stare at those sitting opposite, either have to look up or down. Everyone would naturally look up at the advertisements, so that is the reason that the sides above the windows of a car are the most expensive advertising space to be had.

Advertising in itself is a great business. How is it that one day we see a certain advertisement of collars in a car, and the next day, in no matter what car we ride, the same make of collar will have a different advertisement? This quick change throughout the thousands of cars is due to the efficiency of the companies that own the advertising space. These companies rent out small blocks of the car space to different firms, and, on receiving the advertisement that the firm wishes to have placed in the car, they send a small army of men with the posters through the trains in the small hours of the morning. This is the reason why we never see the advertisements being changed.

The making of the posters for the cars is an art in itself. It is necessary to have the advertisement striking, but also it is impossible to use too many colors in doing so. Then, too, the poster must not

infringe on the copyrights of the thousands of advertisements that have gone before. Many different ideas are used to attract one's attention. Some rely on short verses to make one amused; others resort to irregularities in their printing; while still others for month after month do not say what they intend to advertise, but keep you watching for their purpose. Some posters have become so well fixed in the public mind that their lines are stock phrases of our vocabulary. There are still others that we look for from month to month, such as: The Pearly Girl, etc. In such posters the art of advertising has reached its highest limits.

### 9. Coal-Mining

The branch of coal-mining which I shall try to describe briefly in this theme is the kind which is carried on in the mountains and valleys of West Virginia. It is the mining of the semi-soft or smokeless coal which is used to a great extent on railroads and steamships.

One would be surprised at the amount of modern machinery to be seen in the larger mines. Ledges are cut along the sides of the mountains; on these are laid narrow-gauge tracks, and over these run electric motors—fat, squat, but powerful—pulling a train of some eighteen or twenty loads and thirty or thirty-five empties.

The tracks form a huge network of steel through mountains, over valleys, and along the edges of precipices.

Just as all roads lead to Rome, so all the tracks have a common end, the tippie.

The tippie is a huge, black structure of wood or steel, reaching from the regular tracks in the valleys high up the face of the mountain, so that the coal dumped in at the top falls by force of gravity through screens, with various-sized holes in them, into the waiting cars. There are several types of coal: "run-o'-mine," used by railroads; "egg," used in cookstoves; "nut," used by steamers; and "pea," used by heating or power plants.

The miners themselves are a rough, jovial lot, always friendly and ready to talk. The mountaineers among them are hardy, honest, and hard-working and hold themselves aloof from the shiftless foreigners.

The homes on the mountain-sides are quite well kept and well drained, since all sewage runs down to the homes in the valleys. On the whole, dirt is in evidence everywhere; children are filthy and ragged; dirty water lies in pools around the doorstep; dirty dogs bark in the sun; and everything is covered with coal-dust.

Everything that is necessary to existence is kept at the various company stores. The marvelously equipped machine and workshops

manufacture almost all the mechanical necessities, such as engines, cars, rails, parts, etc.

At night men in charge of the "undercutter" go into the mines and cut a hole six feet deep, two inches high, across the bottom of a whole "face" of a chamber. They then place a charge, set it off, and enough coal is strewn around the chamber for the whole next day's work of breaking-up and loading.

There are few large towns, and these are widely separated. Each company owning several mines in one place sets up a village, which grows very rapidly. The main forms of amusement are intertown baseball games and boxing contests.

### 10. Coral Islands

If you should examine the top of an old volcano that was about one hundred feet below the surface of the water, you probably would find millions of very small coral polyps. This very small animal is anywhere from one sixteenth to a quarter of an inch in length and very narrow. Small, sharp prongs stick out of this animal to collect substances which form a hard, white shell around it. When the polyp dies, the flesh decays or is worn away by the flow of the water, but the hard shell stays just the same. When millions and millions of polyps are doing this, you can imagine the result—an island.

When the polyps reach the surface of the water, they have to stop. It is impossible for them to work above water. As you probably know, the surface of the earth is always contracting or expanding. Maybe this contraction or expansion is only one inch in a hundred years, but it is always going on. As a result of this rising of the earth's surface the island may be lifted a few inches above water. Down at the very southern end of South America whole islands have been known to either disappear or reappear.

Now the question of how these islands get plants, trees, and bushes on them comes up. This is how it probably happens. A cocoanut seed falls into the ocean; it is carried along by the wind and tide to this island. By chance it hits on some sand that has washed up on the island, and in a few years you have several cocoanut trees. Other seeds follow this one, and the island soon becomes populated by many trees and shrubs, which bear fruits, figs, or only leaves.

### 11. The Moon

The moon is twenty-one hundred miles in diameter. This is one four-hundred-and-thirtieth of the diameter of the sun, which is eight hundred and sixty-six thousand miles. The sun is ninety-three

million miles from the earth, while the moon is only two hundred and forty thousand. The sun is so far away that, if there was a baby big enough on the earth to put his finger in the sun, before his nerves could tell his brain that his finger was being burned, and he could take it out, he would be an old man.

The sun is so hot that, if all the coal used in the world in one year should be dumped into the sun, it would be burned up in less than one second. The moon is the opposite of this, as the temperature is about two hundred degrees below zero Fahrenheit.

The surface of the moon is covered with large volcanic mountains and plains, which when seen from the earth form what is commonly known as "The Man in the Moon." The highest mountain on the side of the moon that the earth sees is twenty-four thousand feet high, as was figured from the shadows.

A thing that weighs one pound on the earth weighs only one sixth of a pound on the moon. The moon revolves around the sun the same as the earth does, and so we have only seen one side of the moon. Some people believe that the moon grows during each month and that it is self-illuminated. Neither of these things is true. What seems to make the moon grow is the shadow of the earth obscuring the reflection of the sun. The light of the moon is only the reflection of the sun.

## CHAPTER II

### PLANNING A STORY

#### A. NARRATIVES THAT ARE NOT INTERESTING

A story, as generally understood when school themes are spoken of, is *an interesting account of what people did*. That statement is not a strict definition, for there are exceptions to such a brief formula: some stories are not interesting; some stories are about animals or things; some are accounts of what happened to characters who hardly do anything; some are designed to give a picture or to explain a moral lesson or to convey information. But all ordinary stories that contain a plot are *an interesting account of what people did*.

Why, then, is the following paragraph not a story?

Two boys, A and B, are balancing on a board laid across a fence rail. A weighs 100 pounds, and B weighs 120 pounds; and they find that they balance the board when standing at unknown distances from the rail. A child whose weight is 30 pounds climbs on the board beside A, and B keeps the board in balance by moving 2.5 feet farther from the rail.

When we say that this is an algebra problem, not meant for entertainment, we have given only a partial reason. The real reason is that A and B are not people; they are simply weights on a lever. When the "child" climbs on, we suppose for the moment that a human being is about to do some human action; but we learn in the next line that the "child" is merely a 30-pound weight.

Is the following paragraph a story?

X is a member of one community, and Y of another. X challenges Y's community to send a champion to fight a duel with him. Y accepts the challenge. X has tremendous advantages for the encounter, but Y unexpectedly wins.



Here we have at least a kind of skeleton of a story, but no knowledge of whether the two characters are dogs or soldiers, whether they lived in France or Brazil, whether they fought with pitchforks or revolvers, whether Y won by skill or by sheer luck. Real people live in some particular place that is not like any other place in the world; their adventures happen in some special and definite way. Unless we get a knowledge of *where* events happen and *how* they come about and *who* the actors are, we do not feel that we have read a story.

If we expand the narrative about X and Y to meet these requirements, we may have an outline of events like this:

In the year 1015 B. C. the Philistines were at war with the Israelites in Palestine, in the valley of Elah, longitude 35°6' east, latitude 31°48' north. After the battle had been indecisive for some days, Goliath offered to be the champion of his army and issued a challenge to the Israelites to send someone to fight against him. He was probably the mightiest warrior of his time, for he was more than nine feet tall and carried a spear whose head weighed eighteen pounds. The man who accepted his challenge was David, who had boasted that he had killed a lion and a bear while herding sheep, and whose brothers made fun of his recklessness. Goliath was naturally indignant at seeing an unarmed opponent before him, and asked David why he was so reckless. David boastfully replied that he would cut off Goliath's head and feed the bodies of the Philistine army to the birds. Goliath was so unlucky as to be killed by a stone that David threw, and this loss of their champion was a great calamity to the Philistines.

Although this is a story, of a kind, we know that it is a poor one. It does not fail simply because it is brief and bare and matter-of-fact, but because a reader does *not care* who won the fight. For aught we know, Goliath was a fine gentleman and David a conceited lad who deserved to be killed. Our sympathies are not enlisted. Even though we may like to see an ingenious boy conquer a giant, we feel at the end, "Well, what of it?"

#### B. THE CHANGE OF SITUATION—"PLOT"

The artist who first penned the David and Goliath narrative told about a boy who was a faithful and daring shepherd, who

was divinely pointed out to Samuel, who was kept in the background at home, whose older brothers ridiculed him because of their jealousy, who appeared as the champion of the Chosen People at a time when they were in dire straits; the artist pictured Goliath as insolent and impious, so that we want to see him punished; the artist took pains to show that a great deal depended on the outcome—victory or defeat for a whole nation in a war. We care about the result.

Every good story that was ever told has been constructed on the same principle. Whether we hear a funny account of a trained frog or read a romance like *The Lady of the Lake*, we always find a variation of the same method: we meet a character of a certain kind in a certain situation; we meet other characters; these encounter each other or are involved in some series of happenings; there is a crisis of some sort; the situation changes; at the end we are interested to know about the failure or success of the characters. The interesting change of situation is called "plot." In the oral telling of a story success is likely to depend upon the zest with which a speaker introduces the characters and makes the setting real; the turn of the plot, especially in anecdotes, comes very near the end; and any sentence spoken after the true stopping-place will dull the whole effect. Every story told as a school composition will succeed in proportion as it prepares for that crisis and that change of fortune—whether comic or tragic.

### C. THE FOUR "ELEMENTS" OF A STORY

That interesting *change in the fortunes* of characters is the essence of every good story. Such a change is entirely uninteresting unless the characters seem lifelike to us. Hence the principal demand made of every story-teller is that he shall put real people into action. Now, flesh-and-blood characters always have personal peculiarities, go through their experiences at some particular time, live in some actual place, act in some special way. A successful story-teller must have the "who, when, where,

and why" clearly in mind. Hence many students think that they should always begin by describing a character and the time and the place. Though the supposition is usually true for oral composition, it may do harm in written work. The facts about the different elements of story-telling as a school exercise are these:

1. **Character-drawing.** The interest of some good stories depends largely on the peculiarities of a character. In these the crisis and the change of fortune would never have come about if the principal character had not been brave or miserly or self-sacrificing. Therefore an anecdote told orally may fall flat unless the principal characteristics of some person are sketched for the hearers; and the same may be true for a written theme. But to go farther than this is an artist's task, requiring too much space for a 500-word tale of action. Moreover, character-drawing requires the highest degree of skill; it is seldom possible to insist on such exercise of literary talent for a school exercise. What can be demanded—what every student should always demand of himself as he plans a story—is this: to fix in his mind some person that he knows or clearly imagines, and to keep that personality always before him as he writes. The student who does this will find that he is to some extent portraying a character. He should not say to himself, "Now I must picture a person," but should think always of the one question: "Does this person's nature have something to do with making the crisis and the change of fortune more interesting?"

2. **The time.** Time in itself means nothing to an audience. People may be bored by a date or by sentences that carefully explain "when." The point for speaker or writer to keep in mind is this: "Does the time of my narrative have anything to do with making the crisis and the change of fortune more interesting?" Perhaps the wintry season or the "August, 1914," is important because it has a great deal to do with the plot; perhaps it would be distracting or tiresome. Yet the story-teller

must know just what time he has in mind, in order to avoid mistakes.

**3. Place.** Any story is sure to go astray unless the writer knows exactly where the events take place, unless he has the picture in his mind. But whether he ought to give us a paragraph of description—that is entirely a different matter. Mere description may be a lifeless stumbling-block at the outset. The question for a writer to answer is this: "Will my reader get the picture, so that the crisis will seem real and the change of fortune more interesting?" Since events cannot happen in empty space, they must be staged in definite buildings or fields or submarines.

**4. Motives.** The most important element in preparing for the crisis is the characters' motives: "What was this person worrying about?" "What was his ambition?" "In what predicament was he?" All description of a person and his surroundings is useful only as it helps to show more interestingly why a person acts as he does. When we hear a story, we never care about the mere room where someone lives, or the mere color of a character's eyes; our real interest is always in human feelings and impulses. Unless we see at once that an author is showing us why a person acts, we are not eager to read on.

John Grier stepped out of the gates of the penitentiary. He was free! "I'll get you, Judge King. I'll get you if I have to ruin your whole family. You sent me up. Now you are going to take a long ride." So saying, he started off at a fast walk down the winding drive to the highway—to freedom.

When we have read that opening paragraph, we want to find out what results from the motive of revenge.

#### D. TYPICAL FAULTS AND MERITS

We have spoken of four "elements" of a story. They are not to be thought of as so many parts of a compound which can be properly mixed by a recipe of "two quarts of motive, a pint of surroundings, a spoonful of time, seasoned with some

character-drawing." Good story-writing is not done by that cook-book method. An author's instinct is guided by one desire: to interest a reader in a situation which changes after a crisis to a different situation. The design by which he shows us this change is his "plot." Whether he first describes the setting or plunges abruptly into dialogue, whether he tells of previous circumstances or tells nothing of them, whether he explains a motive at length or lets us understand by what the person does—all choices of method will depend on his one principal purpose: to show in the most interesting way a change from the opening situation to a different condition. Here, for instance, are two opposite ways of carrying out the same purpose—namely, showing a hero's despondency.

1. Carl Franklin sat all through dinner without saying a word. His head rested on his hand, while his eyes gazed off into nowhere. That one demerit which had just been reported pierced his head like a sharp knife; then it seemed to cut its way down his throat into his stomach, taking away all his desire for food, leaving him gloomy and regardless of what was going on. Why had he received that demerit?

2. "Sorry; no opening here. You can leave your name and address, though; something might turn up." Thus spoke the brisk chief clerk in the Kingsley and Company offices.

"No, thanks," was the weary response. "Don't bother." Jim Lloyd had a right to be weary. . . .

Most high-school students nowadays read so many magazine stories, have those models so well in mind, that they can quite readily form a plan of presenting characters in a situation which changes at a crisis to another situation. In one way, however, they are likely to be misguided by such models; for magazine stories are ten or twenty times as long as school themes, and so have a comparatively detailed and leisurely development. A 400-word composition is a limited space in which to present people as actors in a plot. If the latter part is not to be hurried and huddled, there must be economy of space in the beginning.

Students learn best by studying school themes just as they were written—neither remarkably good nor very bad—and de-

tecting the merits and defects. The following composition is decidedly good in one way and weak in another.

### A Journey Almost Taken

1. Hank McGill tossed restlessly on his bunk. The snow lay six feet deep outside in the forest. No deer had come into the woods; no rabbits had yet found their way out from their soft, safe retreats under the snow. The family's supply of provisions was almost exhausted. The fifty miles to the nearest settlement could hardly be made by a grown, strong man, let alone a woman. But here he was, laid up with a broken leg.

2. Hettie, his wife, aroused by his unceasing movements, inquired of him whether anything was wanted. On receiving a negative reply she turned over and went back to the dreams in which she saw her children gaunt and weak from lack of food. Next morning she cooked breakfast for the three children, who cried because it was so meager.

3. This routine of asking and refusing went on three times a day for three weeks. During that time the snow had increased a foot. Hank and his wife had agreed that the only thing left to do was for Hettie to set out to try to reach the settlement. Once there, provisions, which could be brought back on a sledge by friends and relatives, might be secured at the store.

4. So early one morning Hettie was to start. All the previous day Hank had pondered on the chances of his wife's getting to her destination. He had found them mighty slim, and had spoken about them. The reply was to the effect that, if the children were to live, food must be secured. Listening at the door between the two rooms of the cabin, the baby had heard that its mother was going away. He informed the other two in a loud voice. Then such a hullabaloo was raised as was never before heard by the trees surrounding the little home. But neither the risks of the trail nor the pleadings of her children could make Hettie desist from her plans.

5. At seven o'clock that evening, when the two youngest boys had been put to bed, and while the eldest was undressing, above the howl of the wind was heard at the outside door a knock. Hank started, then reached for his revolver. He told his wife to open the door, but to be careful not to get into range of the gun. The door was opened. There in the cleared space before the threshold stood Pat McGill, brother of Hank. Behind him could be seen men who had dragged the sledges of provisions that saved the family from almost certain starvation.

The first paragraph presents the situation of grave danger: a family marooned in a forest during winter, the father confined

to his bed, the mother not strong enough to make the fifty-mile snowshoe trip to the settlement, the supply of food very low, the helpless, hungry children. The second paragraph makes the situation more vivid by giving an example of the family's distress—the breakfast, so meager that the children cry. In the third paragraph we have the desperate decision that the wife must undertake the long and dangerous trip on snowshoes. The fourth paragraph leads us on toward the crisis and makes it realistic by telling of the protests of the children and the mother's firm decision. But with all these merits there is a grave fault: there is no preparation for the sudden relief; nothing that the characters have tried to do causes the arrival of Pat McGill. The turn of the plot just happens. To be sure, things do "just happen" in real life; the turn of many a story is caused by a mere coincidence. But few successful stories can be found in which a reversal of fortune—a change to the new situation—is caused by some agency that has never been in the story and has not even been hinted at until near the end. The lucky accident is usually a weak device for the turn of a plot.

### Sixty Blocks and Thirty Dollars

1. While sitting in the den on the day after Christmas, I was aroused from my reading by the shrill note of the mailman's whistle. Springing from my chair, I rushed to the door, because Christmas presents often come late. The postman handed me a large envelope with my name typewritten on the face. I tore it open, and out fell a piece of blue paper, a check for thirty dollars from my uncle. Oh, heavens! what wouldn't I do with that money!

2. The next day a happy boy took the boat at South Ferry and crossed to Manhattan. Because I had a large amount of change in my pockets, there was no need for breaking any of the six crisp five-dollar bills. Arriving across the bay, I took the subway, getting off at Forty-Second Street. Several minutes later I was at Huyler's buying some candy to eat during the show. This done, I set out for a theater. Several blocks up Broadway a large billboard concerning a big detective play attracted my attention. With a determination to see that show I turned my steps toward the theater and soon arrived at the  
law office.

3. "I'd like a good seat in the orchestra about the center of the house," said I, as I put my hand in my pocket to flash out my money.

4. "Yes, sir," was the reply.

5. "Eh-umm—huh—never mind," I gasped in ultimate embarrassment, as I rushed from the place in a sweat. My wallet and money were gone! So sick was I at my carelessness and mad at the pick-pocket—I was sure the money had been stolen—that for a moment I felt like venting my wrath on all Broadway. Then with a flash another thing dawned on me: my last cent had been spent on the candy. What could be done? To be sure I could walk to the ferry, but then the bay would have to be crossed, and I couldn't swim it. I couldn't telephone home, and father had gone out of town, so I couldn't go to his office. Well, the first thing to be done was to get to the ferry, and the next step could be figured out there.

6. I started walking, knowing that at least sixty blocks had to pass under my feet before even the water was reached. After about two hours I reached lower New York, and there in the middle of Broadway I saw a silver spot. With a gasp of joy I rushed into the street and pounced upon the coin; it was a nickel. At least I wouldn't have to swim the bay. Ten minutes later I was on the boat, bound for home, but by no means in a happy mood. My thirty dollars gone, a scolding from mother, and a te-hee from my two sisters was all I could expect.

7. I reached the house, tired, stiff, and angry, and sneaked up to my room. There on the table, where I had left it was——. With a wild shriek of joy I rushed around the house like one possessed, and that night a happy family went to the movies.

The first paragraph gets us well into the mood of the opening situation—the joyful prospect of spending thirty dollars. The preparations for spending are shown in lively fashion by the next three paragraphs, and then in the fifth we are plunged suddenly into the gloom of the loss of the money; the dialogue with the man at the window is realistic and brings the turn of the plot out sharply. Perhaps it would have been better to begin a new paragraph at "Then with a flash another thing dawned on me," because this introduces such a different episode. The finding of a nickel in the sixth paragraph is a very unlikely accident and makes the story seem unreal at this point; but the fault is a minor one, since getting home is not an important part of the plot, and we feel that the boy was sure to get home some-



how without great difficulty. In the last paragraph the one short sentence and a long dash is more interesting for describing the finding of the money than several sentences would have been. Closing with what the "happy family" did leaves a pleasant impression on the reader.

### A Four-Footed Blessing

1. In the little town of Eagle Rock, California, there lived Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Lyons, who had sold their little farm in Iowa to come out to California to see if the climate would cure Jasper's consumption. For six months they had been paying out money for rent, doctors, and living expenses, until the little money they had had nearly dwindled down to nothing. Jasper couldn't work, and of course his wife Mary couldn't, because she had to nurse him. Therefore the financial problem was a serious one for them.

2. In appearance and disposition Mary and Jasper were distinct opposites. In stature Jasper was far from impressive, as he was short, very thin, and his cheeks were sunken. However, one hardly noticed these things, as his cheerfulness, optimism, and kindly nature completely overshadowed his afflictions. Mary differed from him in many ways. She was strong, robust, tall, and very heavy, but in spite of all these blessings she was very pessimistic and could never be convinced that every cloud has a silver lining.

3. One morning in March Jasper and Mary might have been seen seated beneath a pepper tree in their back yard. A few minutes before, the doctor had told them that the only hope for Jasper was to go to a sanitarium at Monrovia. Mary was now lamenting the terrible expense and dark outlook, and Jasper was sitting there, smiling at a plucky mockingbird, who dared to sing while Mary was talking.

4. Two days later Fuller, a chimpanzee, owned by a Mr. Lanpher of Pasadena, had answered the call of the wild and was running at large over the country. Although the jungle, which he faintly recalled, was lacking, yet the open country appealed to him far more than the sixty-four-foot cage at home. Although he was not aware of it, there were about twenty men hunting for him.

5. Even though this freedom was wonderful, yet he could not live on freedom. Therefore, after he had gone two days without anything but mushrooms to eat, it is no wonder that when he saw a door open and smelled appetizing odors pouring forth from it, he selected that as his objective. Upon entering this door he found himself in a room where on a table he saw many good and substantial things to

eat. In less than five minutes he had done away with everything in sight and was sitting contentedly on the table smoking an old pipe, surveying with practiced eye the things in the room that he might break. Suddenly the door from the dining room to the kitchen opened, and in the doorway was framed the horrified figure of Mary Lyons.

6. Ten minutes later in answer to a hurry call from J. Lyons all three of Eagle Rock's police force hurried to that place. Upon their arrival they saw two queer sights in the Lyonses' bungalow. One was in the kitchen, where Fuller was sitting amid broken china and earthenware. Another was in the dining room, where Jasper was trying in vain to calm his hysterical wife.

7. Two weeks later the following extract appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*: "Mrs. Mary Lyons of Eagle Rock was granted \$5000 by the court in a suit against Mr. L. A. Lanpher of Pasadena for the shock to her nerves, which was caused by Mr. Lanpher's chimpanzee."

The first paragraph introduces the tragic poverty of the Lyonses. In the second paragraph too much space is devoted to the contrast between the characters of the man and wife, for this contrast is not used later to develop the plot. The gloom of the situation is deepened in the third paragraph by showing the urgent need for money for the expenses of the sanitarium. The turning point is the entry of the chimpanzee in the fourth paragraph. If this entry at once solved the difficulty (as the coming of Pat McGill did in the first theme), the story would be unsatisfactory. But this author's contrivance is entirely different. No reader can guess what this new character has to do with the turn of the plot; paragraphs five and six simply relate the damage that he did in an impoverished home. Then the last paragraph gives us quickly the surprising and gratifying news that the Lyonses have all the money they need. Query: does the fact (in paragraph two) that Mrs. Lyons was "robust and very heavy" give a good humorous turn to the award of \$5000 "for the shock to her nerves"?

When you criticize high-school stories, seek answers to the following questions: (1) Is the opening situation so interesting that we want to know how it changes? (2) Is the change prepared for naturally as this situation develops? (3) Does the second situation come as a somewhat surprising and agreeable turn of

events? Those who listen or read may be willing to spend a good deal of time with the slow growth of the opening situation, but they never want the new situation to be long-drawn-out. Humorous anecdotes, longer stories, novels, plays—all follow this model of “prepare for your climax, and then finish quickly.”

## EXERCISES

### I. DETECTING OTHER PEOPLE'S MISTAKES

[Further exercises of this sort are given in Part Six, page 481.]

Write a specific criticism, not less than 75 words long, of each of the following stories. Vague comments are not worth making—for example, “The sixth paragraph is poor.” If a criticism is to be useful to the critic, it must specify the particulars—for example, “In the sixth paragraph the finding of a nickel makes the story seem improbable.” It is best to refer to the names and the expressions used in the theme. It is required that a criticism specify exactly at what point and in precisely what way a passage is successful or defective.

Pay no attention to clumsy expressions, slang, or any such details, but confine your comments to the way the plot is managed.

#### 1. Restored Friendship

“Have you seen my brother this afternoon, Harry?” asked Captain Smith of the owner of the general store at L—.

“He went over to H—, just a little while ago, and he won't be back tonight,” was the response. “Are you and he on speaking terms again?”

“No, but I've got to see him at once. Guess I'll drive over and get him.” He started off immediately for H—, without ever thinking of his light-house. He reached his point of destination about five o'clock; he had his talk with his brother, and started for home. He hadn't gone a mile when a storm broke.

“I'll never make it in time to light those lights,” he muttered to himself. “I wonder if that assistant of mine can handle them?” As he rode farther and farther, his rate of travel became slower and slower. He was constantly thinking of the ships that depended on those lights.

Finally he reached the stable of his nearest neighbor, who lived two miles from the light. He put his rig in the barn, and then told them about it. Now he started to walk the rest of the distance.

He passed over the marsh safely. Now in another twenty minutes he would be home. He stumbled on in the darkness and rain for another ten minutes, and then the light of his tower could be seen. Brown had been equal to the task of lighting the lights in an emergency. He felt relieved all over.

In another ten minutes he pushed open the door. He praised Brown for his good work; then he told what had happened to him without having to be asked, and when he finished, Brown asked one question, which Captain Smith smiled at, but said, "Yes, my brother and I are on speaking terms again. I went all the way over to H— to see him, and it was worth it."

## 2. Fooled by Wireless

"Increase your power!" I flashed out with my wireless key. "Too much interference, and I can't read you."

I was trying to carry on a conversation in wireless with another wireless amateur a hundred miles away. I sat at my radio table on the third floor at home with my ears strained to catch the faintest sound. It was a great night for wireless, one in the cold, clear fall; and it seemed as if everybody who had a wireless in the United States was sending that night. I could not get this important message through to the station at Albany. I could once in a while just hear him say "Qrp" and "Qta," which mean to put on more power and repeat each word twice. On the other hand, I was trying to get him to put on more power, so that I could hear how much of the message he had got.

A very powerful amateur radio station in New York City, hearing us and seeing in what difficulties we were, offered to relay the message. I immediately sent the message to that station, and he easily relayed it to its destination. As it got on toward midnight, a great number of these "spark-coil-kids," as we call them (they are the little boys who have to go to bed at nine o'clock), dropped out of this atmosphere into that one of slumber. Then I found no trouble in communicating with this station in Albany.

Suddenly I heard a very faint, clear spark break out amidst the roar of lots of other stations. It said, "w-h-e-n a-r-e y-o-u g-o-i-n-g t-o b-e-d?" I wondered what in the world that could be. It didn't sign any call, so that I had no means of telling who the sender was. It was sent slowly, but with a fairly clear-cut hand. I listened, but it sent no more.

"C-a-n y-o-u h-e-a-r m-e? I a-m g-o-i-n-g t-o s-t-o-p n-o-w. T-e-l-l m-e i-n t-h-e m-o-r-n-i-n-g i-f y-o-u g-o-t t-h-i-s. G-o-o-d n-i-g-h-t, C-o-n-y."

I read all this, but didn't know where in the world it was coming from. All of a sudden it dawned on me that it was addressed to me, "Cony." Well, it certainly couldn't be anybody except DuMont or Phil Betts, and it didn't sound a bit like either of them.

A chair moved in the next room. Wondering what the cause of that was at this time of night, I went in there and found my brother undressing beside a table, on which was mounted a little buzzer and key. After investigating I found that he had fixed up a buzzer so that it would send very weak wireless signals by attaching it to his bed-springs.

### 3. A Doctor's Job

"Someone wants you on the phone, Eddy," said one of the girls in the house, waking me up one morning about four o'clock: "The bell rang so hard in the back hall that it woke me up."

"I'll be right there. Tell them to hold the wire," I answered, crawling out of bed and finding my way to the telephone. "Hello. Yes, doctor. Surely; I'll be right down. We all have to do our part."

"What are you going to do—take the doctor on a call?"

"Yes; he just had a hurry call and asked me if I wouldn't take him up in the hills, as his horse is sick."

I got dressed as quickly as I could, for it was awfully cold, and hurried out to the cold barn to hitch up my sleepy horse, who seemed very nuch against getting out of her warm bed to go out into the cold morning.

After I had hitched up and got the doctor, I learned why we had to go at such an hour on a cold winter morning. It seems that a man was very sick up in the hills, and his wife had called up the doctor to ask him to come up and see what was the matter. The doctor did not wait a minute, but said he would be up as soon as he got a horse. It was a doctor's job to go when called, so he went, and I felt I was quite a hero to take him on the errand of mercy.

The sleighing was a good deal different as we left the sleeping town and mounted the hills which surround the village. Up there the wind had blown the snow into great drifts, and in many places we were forced to walk. We tipped over several times, and the doctor and I were pretty tired of the ride when at last we came in sight of our destination.

As we stopped outside a small house, a man of middle age came out

and greeted the doctor. "I'm awfully sorry to have got you up here, doctor. May, here, my wife, thought I was sick, but I feel all right now. Too bad you had to come way up here for nothing."

#### 4. Taking a Chance

Before I had a license to drive an auto, I was allowed to take out the car once in a while, but I generally was not. As I live in New Jersey, I guess that you know how hard it is to get a license. Even if you know how to drive, you have to get a permit which lasts three weeks; then you have to go to Newark or some other large city and take an exam: one is the actual driving; the other is written.

Almost all the policemen in town were used to seeing me drive for my mother, so I did not worry as much over them as I did over out-of-town policemen.

One day last summer as I was driving down a certain street, I saw a policeman coming in the opposite direction. As he got nearer, I recognized him as one of the meanest men (in my estimation) in town. Although he was a town policeman, I began to get a little shaky in the knees. He now passed me. Just as he did so, he pulled out his watch, looked at it, and stuck it back in his pocket.

When I thought he was far enough back of me for comfort, I turned around to look at him and see if he had turned around. He hadn't turned yet, but he was turning. I became nervous all over now. Should I go faster, slower, or continue at the same rate? This was the problem that confronted me. I hastily decided to keep on at the same speed.

I looked back again; he was still following me, but he was decidedly closer. I became more uncomfortable. I could picture him stopping me, asking for my license, and giving me a summons for court. Would I never get to a side street to turn up? One was coming shortly I knew, but he might overtake me before I got there.

At last it appeared; I turned up, and speeded a little for the hill before me. For the third time I looked back to see if he had followed me around the corner; he hadn't. I never felt so glad in my life. I now looked at my own watch to see the time. It happened to be a little after twelve. At once I saw why he had turned back. His shift was over at twelve, and he had gone back to report at the station before he went to lunch.

That night I persuaded my father to let me get a permit as soon as possible. It is worth taking a chance once in a while, but you always take one chance too many, though in my case, as it happened, I got out all right.

### 5. Saved by the Man Higher Up

Upon his return from France, where he had become an ace, Ted Mulford had been called into the offices of the Joram Motor Car Company. After he had finished telling them about himself, he was presented with a proposition. If he made the trip from New York to Los Angeles in eight days or less, he would be given the Joram Agency in Los Angeles and a check for five thousand dollars. A new Joram stock car would be given him to make the trip, and he was to be accompanied by Baxter, an expert mechanician.

Mrs. John F. Mulford, a widow, lived in a very modest two-room apartment on West 126th Street, New York. For the last two years she had been forced to do sewing for her living, and this had been too much for her rather delicate health. The only reason that she hadn't broken down before was that she was doing this work that her son might not have to stay home to support her. She was truly a very wonderful mother. It is no wonder, then, that Ted Mulford accepted the Joram offer, for he realized how beneficial the mild California climate would be to his mother's health and what he could do for her with the money.

After four days of grueling driving at breakneck speed Mulford and Baxter found themselves stranded half-way across the famous Death Valley in California. The water in the radiator and canteen had been entirely used up, and the men were now confronted with a very serious situation. This tragic thing had occurred early in the morning, and all day the two had been seeking in vain for a water-hole. Wandering around in the hot desert for a whole day without any water is very hard for a man to endure.

On their return to the abandoned machine they tried to quench their thirst a little by drinking some lubricating oil, but this had made them both very ill. As the leather on the seats was too hot to sit on, they sought the only shade for miles around, which was under the car. Lying beneath the car, they looked up into the pale blue heavens and saw buzzards circling above them, a horribly suggestive sight of the fate which might be theirs.

In the sky from the south there seemed to be coming a huge buzzard, but as it came closer, it assumed a different shape. Both men saw it at the same time and in a few seconds recognized it to be an airplane. Even before they could be seen by the aviator, they began to wave frantically to him. He drew nearer and nearer, but appeared not to see them until he was nearly directly above them. When the aviator caught sight of them, he dived and landed near the car. Ted Mulford was lost in getting water from this aviator, who was an in-

structor at Kelly Field, and Mulford then continued on his interrupted trip.

Two days later a very dusty and muddy Joram drove up to the steps of the Los Angeles Court House, where its occupants were greeted by the mayor, whom the driver, Mulford, presented with a letter to him from New York's mayor. There an official of the American Automobile Association told Mulford that he had broken the transcontinental record by making it in six days, eight hours, and fifty-two minutes. Thereupon Ted broke another in getting to a telegraph office to wire a certain Mrs. J. F. Mulford.

## II. ORAL COMPOSITION TOPICS

Telling a story orally to a class is excellent practice in (1) holding the attention of an audience (2) with increasing interest (3) till the climax is reached, and (4) not going beyond the climax—qualities which are essential to all effective speaking. Oral story-telling is also more than practice. Speakers who have a serious message to tell, or plea to make, or argument to advance, often find that a humorous or curious anecdote helps to enlist the sympathies of the hearers. Skilful after-dinner speakers usually introduce some stories. Their method is just that of effective written composition: presenting the characters in such a way that the audience feels somewhat acquainted with them in an opening situation and cares about what happens to them when the turn of events comes.

Stories for oral telling are easily found. Prepare two-minute compositions (or longer, as the teacher directs), announcing how you found the subject. Use the suggestions in the following list to help yourself in inventing a plot.

1. **The story that you have recently heard.** If you have recently listened to a story told by someone who had the knack, you will do well to retell it to the class, imitating so far as possible the devices that caused you to enjoy it.

2. **A home favorite.** In your home you have doubtless heard some curious affair of real life that visitors have liked to listen to; that is a plot prepared for you. An example is: "A man wanted a dozen plates like those in a set of rare chinaware that he owned; he sent a cracked plate as a model to a Chinese potter; the potter



made twelve exact imitations—*crack and all!*” Any such skeleton of fact or legend can be made into a good recitation if the details are filled in with some animation.

3. **A suggested title or topic.** Your imagination may be challenged and produce a plot with surprising ease if it merely sees a title.

- a. The dog that had to die.
- b. There was something else on the shelf.
- c. When the phonograph said the wrong thing.
- d. Algernon Chesterfield contemplates suicide.
- e. The cat that dared.
- f. Young John Smith tries to fool a policeman.
- g. Only one letter wrong.
- h. At that moment he discovered that the letter was still in his pocket.
- i. Just half an inch to spare
- j. The trapper trapped.

4. **Changing a plot.** Invent a different plot for the characters in a theme in Part I of these Exercises, or in one of the first four themes of Part Six.

5. **Suggestions by the class.** If it is desirable at any time to have the whole class limited to one subject (or to two or three subjects), a list of topics may be proposed by different students, and the selection made by a vote of the class.

6. **Using the newspaper.** See III, following.

### III. MATERIAL FOR WRITTEN STORIES

Material for written stories—more than any class will have time to develop during the year—can be obtained in the ways suggested for oral topics. The world teems with stories. The first newspaper you pick up will tell of an incident (perhaps ten incidents) that will furnish an opening situation. That is all we need to start the imagination—that opening situation where lifelike characters are in a predicament. For example, we read that Antonio Bianchi, prosperous keeper of a little shop, was threatened by a Black Hand letter; it happened that Antonio was a daring and clever fellow who contrived to outwit the criminals. The story is almost ready-made. But if Antonio had been a coward, if the newspaper had not told us the outcome,

the situation would have been all the better. Cowards have often succeeded where reckless dare-devils have failed. We may make a story with a more exciting turn of events if we are left free to imagine what happened. That is the method of born storytellers. Mark Twain once put it pithily to a traveler from India: "Young man, first get your facts—and then you can distort them as much as you like." That young novice was Rudyard Kipling. He profited, as all school writers can profit, by the advice.

There is no need of wasting space in a textbook to give many illustrations; a few will point the way to an inexhaustible mine of plots.

Write stories of about 300 words suggested by situations like the following:

1. Bobbie writes to Santa Claus.
2. Some boys come upon a pile of buried bones.
3. After all that rehearsal with the fire-extinguisher.
4. Mrs. S. has brought home a baby leopard; it is very gentle now, but—.

## CHAPTER III

### PLANNING NARRATION AND DESCRIPTION

#### A. NARRATION

"Narration" is a very general term that means "an account of what happened." There are many forms of narratives. One form interests a reader by a change of situation called "plot." Since this is a special type, the commonest kind of school writing, a separate chapter was devoted to it, and it was given a particular name of its own—"story."

There is no hard-and-fast line between a story and other kinds of narrative; sometimes things do so happen in real life as to bring about a sort of plot, a "true story." We need not bother our heads with these theoretical differences. Professional writers do not say to themselves, "Now I will make a narrative"; they have in mind a certain purpose and work for that certain kind of effect. The purpose is what the amateur should imitate. (See Chapter XXII, "The One Purpose.") He should always be intent upon whether he is constructing a plot, or stating how things really happened, or forming a picture, or explaining, or persuading. At present we are concerned with the purpose of "relating a series of happenings."

All such accounts are for convenience in this chapter called "narratives." Examples are "how Washington crossed the Delaware," "catching my first fish," "a night in the city without any money." Other narratives are a diary, the life of a noted man, a letter telling the events of a trip, an oral recitation that tells the history of the first American flag.

The following account of being dragged down by a whale is a good model of narrative: (1) it has one evident purpose that is carried out (2) in a good order of ideas (3) to a climax.

1. "Look out, lads," cried Tom, and at once throwing the turn off the loggerhead, he made an attempt to clear it. The captain, in trying to do the same thing, slipped and fell. Seeing this, I sprang up, and, grasping the coil as it flew past, tried to clear it. Before I could think, a turn whipped round my left wrist. I felt a wrench as if my arm had been torn out of the socket, and in a moment I was overboard, going down with almost lightning speed into the depths of the sea. Strange to say, I did not lose my presence of mind. I knew exactly what had happened. I felt myself rushing down, down, down, with terrific speed; a stream of fire seemed to be whizzing past my eyes; there was a dreadful pressure on my brain and a roaring as if of thunder in my ears. Yet, even in that dread moment, there flashed into my mind thoughts of eternity, of my sins, and of meeting with my God.

R. M. Ballantyne, *Fighting the Whale*

Mere narrative is in one way the easiest kind of writing, because very little brain-power is necessary to set down one happening after another, and even an unintelligent speaker can ramble along through some events until his time is up. Such a "string of things" may succeed if written as a letter to a mother who is eager to hear of every little adventure. But to the indifferent world it will not seem a composition at all: its parts are not arranged; it is not a structure made according to a plan for carrying out one purpose. Unless a speaker or a writer can contrive such structure, he has failed. And since it is often difficult to arrange a series of happenings according to a plan, for one purpose, a good narrative may be hard to compose. Students should always be on their guard against a purposeless narrative. Some schools are almost afraid to assign narrative topics, for fear of encouraging aimless and planless work.

The man who was dragged down by a whale had a purpose—to show what his sensations were. He closed with the most striking one. The reader knows, when he has reached the end, that the passage has all been about the one experience.

In the next narrative we follow events in a time order to a climax.

2. I saw Ned's father in one of his fits, and saw his flesh gathered up, as it were, in a heap about the bigness of half an egg, to the un-

utterable torment and affliction of the man. A man named Freeman, who was more than an ordinary doctor, was sent for to cast out the devil. I was there when he attempted to do it; the manner whereof was this: They had the possessed man in an outroom and laid him upon his stomach upon a bench, with his head hanging down over the bench's end. They bound him down thereto; which done, they set a pan of coals under his mouth, and put something therein which made a great smoke—by this means, as it was said, to fetch out the devil. There they kept the man till he was almost smothered in the smoke, but no devil came out of him. At this Freeman was somewhat abashed, the man greatly afflicted, and I made to go away wondering and fearing.

*Bunyan, Life of Mr. Badman*

The account of "the possessed man" is in several ways a good model for oral composition. (1) The opening description is prompt, clear, brief. (2) The sentences are not joined by "and, and, and," nor by "then," nor by "so"; they stand as comfortable units without any uneasy, awkward, tiring sounds that untrained speakers make before beginning a statement. "And," "so," and "then" are seldom needed; no "ah" sound is needed. Try in your next oral composition to begin each sentence firmly and confidently, not using a connective unless it is really needed. (3) The last sentence is strong and sounds like the end; it shows how deep an impression the scene made. A good recitation may be almost spoiled by a final statement that "keeps on going" beyond the climax. "Stop at the right moment" is golden advice for oral composition.

#### B. DESCRIPTION \*

If we should ask a critic what "form of writing" Bunyan used in telling about "the possessed man," he would probably answer: "Bunyan wrote description. For him the narrative form was incidental. He chose that as the most effective way to present the terror that he felt at witnessing the scene in his childhood." The critic would thus teach us that there is no

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\* The fallacy of teaching description as simply "the making of a picture" is well exposed by Prof. R. M. Weaver in the *English Journal* for February, 1919: "What

fixed boundary line between narration and description. He might even argue that the account of the man drawn into the sea was a description, since it "gives a picture" of the affair. We may let him dispute the question with Bunyan's ghost.

What we want to understand is the purposes behind the names. If the purpose is "to tell a series of events," we call the result narration; if the purpose is to show "what a situation was like," we call the result description. Description focuses our attention on one scene or one brief time or one emotion; it tells what the impressions were. The most common failure in school descriptions is to forget the one scene and to wander off into narrative; or to wander through a hundred words of introductory narrative before settling down to one scene.

Observe how in the next selection, a description of Lord Fairfax, Irving uses an anecdote to show "what sort of man Lord Fairfax was." The affair of being jilted is not inserted for love of a story, but for the sake of giving us a picture of the man who employed the youthful Washington to survey land. Each item helps to put the personality before us. Irving has not written "a string of items," but has composed a number of facts into one whole.

3. Lord Fairfax was now nearly sixty years of age, upward of six feet high, gaunt and raw-boned, near-sighted, with light-gray eyes, sharp features, and an aquiline nose. However ungainly his present appearance, he had figured to advantage in London life in his younger days. He had received his education at the University of Oxford, where he acquitted himself with credit. He afterwards held a commission, and remained for some time in a regiment of horse called the Blues. This title and connections, of course, gave him access to the best society, in which he acquired additional currency by contributing a paper or two to Addison's *Spectator*, then in great vogue.

In the height of his fashionable career he became strongly attached to a young lady of rank; paid his addresses, and was accepted. The wedding day was fixed; the wedding dresses were provided, together with servants and equipages for the matrimonial establishment. Suddenly the lady broke her engagement. She had been dazzled by the superior brilliancy of a ducal coronet.

It was a cruel blow, alike to the affection and pride of Lord Fair-

fax, and wrought a change in both character and conduct. From that time he almost avoided the sex, and became shy and embarrassed in their society. This may have been among the reasons which ultimately induced him to abandon the gay world and bury himself in the wilds of America.

The longer complex sentences in Irving's description may be a model too difficult to imitate in oral composition, but every student will improve his speaking if he cultivates some of the easier devices that appear here—for example: beginning with "in the height of his career" or "from that time"; saying "it was and wrought" or "he avoided and became," rather than "*it* was and *it* wrought" or "*he* avoided and *he* became." Occasional sentences of those types make an oral composition sound more mature and agreeable.

The following account of mosquitos in Siberia has no narrative element; it is a pure description of what the pest is like.

4. About the tenth of July the mosquito—that curse of the northern summer—rises out of the damp moss of the plains and winds his shrill horn to apprise all animated nature of his triumphant resurrection and his willingness to furnish musical entertainment to man and beast upon extremely reasonable terms. In three or four days, if the weather be still and warm, the whole atmosphere will be literally filled with clouds of mosquitos, and from that time until the tenth of August they persecute every living thing with a bloodthirsty eagerness which knows no rest and feels no pity.

Escape is impossible and defense useless; they follow their unhappy victims everywhere, and their untiring perseverance overcomes every obstacle which human ingenuity can throw in their way. Smoke of any ordinary density they treat with contemptuous indifference; mosquito-bars they either evade or carry by assault; and only by burying himself alive can man hope to finally escape their relentless persecution. In vain we wore gauze veils over our heads and concealed ourselves under calico *pologs*. The multitude of our tiny assailants was so great that some of them sooner or later were sure to find an unguarded opening, and just when we thought ourselves most secure we were suddenly surprised and driven out of our shelter by a fresh and unexpected attack.

Mosquitos, I know, do not enter into the popular conception of Siberia; but never in any tropical country have I seen them in such

immense numbers as in northeastern Siberia during the month of July. They make the great moss tundras in some places utterly uninhabitable, and force even the reindeer to seek the shelter and the cooler atmosphere of the mountains. In the Russian settlements they torment dogs and cattle until the latter run furiously about in a perfect frenzy of pain, and fight desperately for a place to stand in the smoke of a fire. As far north as the settlement of Kolyma, on the coast of the Arctic Ocean, the natives are compelled, in still, warm weather, to surround their houses with a circle of smudges, to protect themselves and their domestic animals from the ceaseless persecution of mosquitos.\*

Kennan's description is printed in three paragraphs. Have you ever realized that an effective public speaker paragraphs what he says? If such a person were delivering orally the passage about the mosquitos, he would make some shift of position, some gesture, or some alteration in his voice, to show that he had come to a new division. This "paragraphing" of oral composition is helpful to an audience. A scientist who can lecture in a telling style would instinctively show, if he were delivering the next passage about the speed of corpuscles, that at the words "we see, then" he has reached his concluding section.

5. Starting with a candle flame and a gold-leaf electroscope, we have been carried irresistibly to the conclusion that there are bodies a thousand times smaller than the smallest atom. . . . We have now a very reasonable curiosity to know how fast they travel. . . . The velocity of the corpuscles is simply prodigious. The speed of the swiftest rifle bullet is insignificant in comparison. Their velocity is not at all constant, for it depends on the electric force with which they are charged and upon the amount of air left in the vessel; but the corpuscle that does not travel with a speed a thousand times that of the swiftest cannon-ball, which is two thousand miles an hour, is slow indeed. The only velocity with which the speed of corpuscles can be compared is that of light—186,000 miles a second—and corpuscles have been observed with about half this velocity. . . .

We see, then, that a candle flame, or a glowing wire, or a metal exposed to light, is not by any means the restful object it appears. Every object in the neighborhood of such bodies must be continuously bombarded by bullets flying with an enormous velocity.†

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\* From *Tent Life in Siberia* by George Kennan. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London.

† From *Duncan's New Knowledge*, copyright 1905, by the A. S. Barnes Company.



## C. ORDER AND PROPORTION

From these five examples we should be able to draw some conclusions that will help in arranging the material of any narrative or descriptive theme.

1. **Time order.** The five passages are arranged as a series of examples that are less and less like a story. The first, "dragged down by a whale," is a record of events in the order in which they happened; the second, "trying to remove the evil spirit," though not written for its narrative effect, does follow a time order. A reader is likely to feel some dissatisfaction or confusion unless he is carried along in a straight line of events. There are exceptions, and a practiced writer may know when a violation is safe; but no amateur should try this "looping back" unless he feels confident that he has something to gain by so doing. In number three there is hardly any occasion for a time order, since the historian is presenting the traits of Lord Fairfax's character; yet even here we have the general arrangement of (1) youthful prowess, (2) later disappointment, (3) secluded old age. The time order is apparent in number four, "mosquitos in Siberia"; for we are told about the first appearance of the pest, *and then* about the ferocity of it when it has reached its height. In the paragraphs about corpuscles we are, as it were, inside a flame, *and then* we step out to consider the "neighborhood."

2. **Place order.** "Stepping out into the neighborhood" suggests another useful guide for description—progress from point to point without "looping back" in space. The man was in the whale-boat, went over the gunwale, went down, went along, came up at another point. In number two we watch the proceedings from some one point; there is no confusion of places. In the description of Lord Fairfax we move from Oxford, to the Blues, to London, to the wilds of America. In number four (about mosquitos) we reach a climax near the end by going "even as far north as Kolyma."

Place order is specially important in giving a picture of still

life—such as a building or a rural scene or a situation in a city. Though the plan of the following “camp in the woods” may not seem very disorderly at first glance, it begins by taking us out to the end of the point, then comes back and builds a dock, then goes through the woods a quarter of a mile, next around the point, and finally returns to the cabin.

Our cabin was situated on a small tongue of land covered mostly with birch trees, except for a few large pines on the end of the point. We built a dock, close to the cabin, large enough for two rowboats or canoes. It was rather rough on the lake at the time we built the dock, and while working, driving in one of the piles, my brother fell into the water. We constructed a trail through the woods by cutting many small trees and bushes. This was about a quarter of a mile long, and straight as an arrow, while the trip by water was three-eighths of a mile around a rocky point. Around the cabin we cleared out all the brush and made it as neat as possible.

The only safe plan for describing places is to go from foreground to background, or from bottom to top, or from left to right, or from the circumference to the center—at all events to furnish the reader some easily followed place order. The writer of good description always realizes from what point of view he is looking and in what direction he goes if he has to move; he will never jump from one part of his scene to another without carefully advising the reader.

**3. The “story” effect.** Since high-school authors are more familiar with stories than with any other form of composition, they will do well to apply their knowledge so far as possible in writing narration or description. It is often possible to arrange the details in narrative form, as in the first two examples above. It is always best to aim at human interest, as Irving did by telling of the jilting of Fairfax, and as Kennan did by telling of how people suffered from the mosquitos. A narrative form makes it easier to keep a time order. Even in dealing with such intangible things as corpuscles a feeling for the “story” effect is likely to make description vivid; and it impels a writer to work up to some climax like “continuously bombarded by bullets.”

4. **Proportion.** Not one of the five examples wastes any space in getting at the subject—for example, the author who tells about being dragged by a whale does not use an “introductory paragraph” to tell us about what he had had for breakfast and how his hand had been blistered and how he was enjoying the brilliant sunlight that shone upon an endless succession of long, lazy swells. No; he says that Tom told them to “Look out”; and at once we see three men trying to clear the coil of rope. Bunyan does not devote several sentences to describing the “outroom” or the operation of making “a great smoke.” In the description of mosquitos we are not told about the price of mosquito-netting or where the blankets were manufactured; all the space is used to concentrate our attention on the numbers and voracity of the insects. The scientist who told about corpuscles did not digress from their swiftness to speak slowly about how the speed of a slow cannon-ball is computed; nor is one fourth of the space used for telling about the electric force and the amount of air. All such by-the-way items in any good description are passed over quickly, and the major part of the space is devoted to the major topic.

5. **Order of increasing importance.** George Kennan begins with a rather slight and humorous allusion to the “shrill horn” when mosquitos first appear, tells of their bloodthirsty eagerness, shows how a man can escape only by “burying himself alive,” describes the tormented dogs and reindeer in “a frenzy of pain,” and concludes with their “ceaseless persecution.” Unless a writer takes pains to arrange his items according to some such scheme of increasing importance, he is likely to present a jumbled picture, a hit-or-miss pile of details.

There is no standard formula, to be sure, for arranging the items of a description. Artists who make word-pictures follow no model and have no faith in recipes. But this book is not written for artists. The hints in this chapter are for the average high-school writer, who will find it advisable to arrange items in an order of increasing importance, unless he sees a way to be more entertaining by some other arrangement. Students are

always urged to exercise their own invention *if they have some plan.*

6. **Closing.** In a normal descriptive theme some important item will come last. Yet there is no necessity that a theme should conclude with the greatest matter or the most striking feature. The only requirement is that there shall be some satisfactory end. We are never satisfied with a perfunctory summary like "Thus I have shown that the crowd was very boisterous." We are never satisfied with a description that "simply stops" after a seventh item. We demand something that shall fitly conclude the whole. "Thoughts of meeting with my God" is certainly a fit conclusion for a description of being drawn into the ocean by a harpooned whale. "Wondering and fearing" is an epitome of the scene that Bunyan told of; "bury himself in the wilds of America" summarizes the nature of Fairfax's old age. "Enormous velocity" sounds like a conclusion of the whole matter.

Some students are amazingly indifferent to the final words of a composition and will "back-track" at this most important point to a topic which is opposed to their main idea or which weakly straggles on beyond to some new and insignificant scene. They might have concluded a description of Fairfax with "among the reasons," or might have added after "ceaseless persecution of mosquitos" a paragraph about how to make smudges. Every normal description closes with something significant, something pertinent to the whole subject, something that gives an effect of climax.

#### D. PLANNING BY OUTLINE

[A more complete treatment of outlining is given in Chapters IV and V. See also Chapter XXIV, Section C.]

If we analyze the plans of these five narratives and descriptions, we shall find good models for outlining our own compositions. A speaker or writer who has never learned to see his course in advance is like a navigator who steers by luck. A vessel is unsafe unless it is guided by a compass, and a theme is

likely to zigzag to destruction unless the writer is guided by a plan that he knows *in advance*. Oral composition is in even greater need of a preliminary plan; for a speaker has no opportunity, as a writer has, to turn back from false starts. Successful composition must be planned in advance.

There is less need of an outline for a story than for any other form of composition, since the plot almost forces a writer into a tolerable order. In the case of narrative the principal use of an outline is to insure a time order and a strong conclusion. In the case of a description the outline helps to arrange the items in such a way as to build up one impression.

A plan is not always set down on paper; we know that some novelists and editors never use any written diagram of what they are to do. Their plan is mental. But their work is done according to a plan—that is the point for amateurs to notice.

An outline of the first selection, "being dragged down by a whale," is:

1. The dangerous coil.
2. Dragged overboard.
3. Sensations while going down.
4. Thoughts of death.

The outline might have been more brief, or it might have been very much extended. Every outline is a compromise between a brief index and a full analysis. For example, when the author was preparing to write his long chapter, this paragraph might have deserved no more mention than "dragged down"; whereas a diagram of the entire scheme of ideas in the paragraph is only partially represented by the following array of sub-headings.

- I. The dangerous coil.
  1. Tom's danger.
    - a. He warns.
    - b. He attempts to clear.
  2. The captain's danger.
- II. Dragged overboard.
  1. I spring.

2. I try to clear.
  3. Caught by the wrist.
  4. Into the water.
- III. Sensations while going down.
1. Kept presence of mind.
  2. Feelings.
    - a. Terrific speed.
    - b. Stream of fire.
    - c. Pressure on brain.
    - d. Roaring in ears.
- IV. Thoughts that flashed.
1. Eternity.
  2. Sins.
  3. Meeting God.

An outline containing one third as many words as a theme may possibly be a useful exercise to exhibit fully what order of ideas a writer followed, but it is an absurdity as a preliminary chart made by a writer to guide himself. On the other hand the two-word memorandum "dragged down" may be absurdly brief. A school must advise some type of outline that is between the two extremes. One common type, widely used, which experience shows to be helpful, is a list of topics, one for each paragraph, or for each section that might have been a paragraph. This requirement obliges a student to show that he knows *when the topic changes somewhat*. If he is always within that limit of orderliness, he will never wander far from the straight line.

A mere list of topics is not always sufficient; we may have to indicate that a composition is in two or three main parts and that one or more of these parts has subdivisions, as in the long outline given on page 75. Further examples of this type will be shown in Chapters IV and V.

An outline indicates the larger divisions of thought, serving as a general guide-line for construction. It cannot do more than that. It is not a cure-all for disorderly thinking; it is not a kind of magic that insures perfect coherence. The untrained student

will need much exercise in paragraph structure (Chapters VII-X) before he learns the whole art of making an orderly theme.

In Bunyan's paragraph there are three steps of development, which could be indicated by dividing it into three paragraphs.

1. How the man was afflicted (the first sentence).
2. Freeman's method of trying to cast out the devil.
3. The effect of the scene (the last sentence).

Irving's description of Fairfax is in three paragraphs, of which the first has a very unusual feature, hardly to be attempted by amateurs in short themes: a first sentence that is not directly related to the main topic. After this preliminary statement about Fairfax's personal appearance the topics are:

1. Figuring successfully in London life.
2. Jilted.
3. A recluse in America.

The outline of the description of Siberian mosquitos is obvious, for there are three paragraphs, each closely unified around one topic:

1. When and with what spirit the mosquitos come.
2. Impossibility of keeping them away (smoke, mosquito-bars, pologs).
3. The fierceness of their attack (on reindeer, dogs and cattle, natives).

As soon as Professor Duncan has indicated what corpuscles are, he says that we are curious to know their speed; and then in an orderly series of four sentences he pictures the speed by comparisons. His second paragraph tells how corpuscles bombard neighboring objects. The plan is indicated by two brief headings.

1. Speed of corpuscles.
2. How they bombard.

A textbook might continue to present dozens of outlines—and not be teaching anything. We do not learn the art of outlining by watching someone else do the work, but by working.

**EXERCISES****I. OUTLINES**

Prepare outlines of the themes in Part IV of these exercises.

[Other assignments for outlining are given in the exercises for Chapters IV and V.]

**II. TIME ORDER**

Tell definitely at what points the time order is wrong in the following four narratives. What arrangement would produce a proper time order?

[Additional exercises of this kind are given in Part Six.]

**1. In Comus's Palace**

The scene in which the Lady said these lines was the dining-room of Comus's castle. In the middle of the stage was a long table filled with all sorts of luxuries. Comus's rout were gathered about the table, and over on the side soft music was being played. The Lady was seated on a throne, and Comus was standing before her with his wand.

The Lady became separated from her brothers, and Comus, by means of a magic powder, made himself appear as a villager to her. He had enticed her to his castle by telling her that he would take her to a simple cottage.

The scene which I have just described then opened, and Comus was telling the Lady that he could change her into alabaster. The Lady told him not to boast, for he could not touch the freedom of her mind.

2. Bryant's *Thanatopsis* was the first real poem written by an American writer. In this the author showed his feelings and thoughts about what was to come in the future, as he always worried about this. Although it was written in 1811, his father did not realize its wonder until 1817, when he took it to Boston and had it printed. Dana, one of the men of the publishing concern, was said to have run to his friends to show them the manuscript that the father had brought, but they thought that it was a fraud and had been written by some Englishman.

3. Lydia tells her friend, Julia, about her quarrel with Ensign Beverley. She says they had a quarrel, but it was only meant in



fun. She was afraid that she never would have a quarrel with him, so she made one. She wrote a letter to herself telling herself that Beverley had been paying attentions to another lady. Lydia had shown this to him and said he was fickle. Before she was able to tell him it was only a jest, Mrs. Malaprop discovered the lovers and separated them.

4. After Falstaff had been unable to persuade Prince Hal to go and hold up some travelers, Poins told him to go out, saying that he would persuade the Prince to go. Then, as soon as Falstaff had left, he told the Prince his plan. They two were to agree to meet Falstaff and his companions at some place, and were then to be late. They would thereupon wait until Falstaff and his band should rob some people of their money, and after that they—that is, Prince Hal and Poins—would attack this party and take the stolen money from them. They should disguise themselves so that Falstaff and his friends would not recognize them. The joke would be to hear Falstaff boast to them of the way he had fought, after he had really fled from them.

### III. FAULTY DESCRIPTIONS

In Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I*, Act 4, Scene 2, Falstaff gives a description of his worthless company of soldiers, emphasizing the fact that it is composed of cowards, jail-birds, ragged wretches—men utterly incompetent to fight; the following paragraphs were written to summarize Falstaff's description. Criticize the proportion and the arrangement for "increasing importance," remembering that criticism ought to point out merits as well as defects, and that some themes given for criticism in this book are good examples of school writing.

1. Falstaff was sent to engage some soldiers. The result was somewhat disappointing. As one man said, he seemed to have robbed the gibbets of their burdens. He had men who were engaged to be married and whose banns had been read twice. He had men who were only half clothed. As Sir John himself said, "I' faith, there is only a shirt and a half between them all; and the half is made of two napkins tacked together and thrown over the shoulders. But no need to worry about that, for they will find plenty of linen on the hedges along the road." The outstanding feature of them all was that they were thin. Falstaff said that he was as thin as any of them. "Aye," replied Prince Hal, "if you can call three fingers over the ribs thin."

2. Falstaff got for soldiers a crowd of half-dressed men. He said that he had enlisted a hundred and fifty men and had got three hundred pounds. According to Falstaff there was only a shirt and a half in the company. The half-shirt consisted of two napkins pinned together and thrown over the shoulders like a shawl. Falstaff claimed that the whole shirt had been stolen from the innkeeper at St. Alban's. He said that the other men would probably get shirts from the different innkeepers on the journey. When the Prince made remarks about his men, Falstaff said they could fight as well as anybody.

3. Falstaff and his company had stopped outside Coventry, for he said that he would be ashamed to have them march through the place. They were a ragged assembly of tramps, beggars, and thieves, most of whom he had pressed into service. Most of them did not have enough to wear, and Falstaff himself said that there was only a shirt and a half in the whole company. They were an ill-looking lot, too. In fact, someone had said that he must have pressed into service even the bodies from the gallows.

4. Falstaff's soldiers were hardly recognizable as men, so poorly were they clothed. In fact some of them had practically nothing on. Some of them had shirts uniquely constructed of two pieces of cloth tied together, fitting over the head. When the leaders saw this crowd, they asked what Falstaff had brought them for. He replied, "They will fill up a pit or be cannon food." That these men would find clothing in a short time Falstaff was trying to explain, but they were needed immediately for service.

#### IV. LONGER THEMES FOR CRITICISM

Write specific criticisms of the principal faults and merits of the following narrative and descriptive themes. Pay no attention to wrong uses of words, unless the teacher so directs.

##### 1. The First Man on the Moon

I will not endeavor to tell all the difficulties that we went through in getting to the moon, as that is not my topic. As soon as our machine had made a safe landing, we donned our oxygen suits and descended out of our car. The first thing that I noticed was my extreme lightness, for which I could not account for some time, but then I remembered that the moon is much smaller than the earth, and so the pull of gravity was proportionately less. The next thing that interested me was the strange light—or could I call it that? The stars were plainly visible, and the sky looked like night, while the

ground about me and my companions stood out as if they were in the beam of a search-light; this phenomenon I finally attributed to the lack of atmosphere. Our party decided to climb a near-by mountain, which took us but a short time because of the long strides and prodigious jumps that we were able to take. From the summit of the peak I looked down upon as strange a sight as man has ever seen. Within my range of sight were hundreds of mountains and extinct volcanos. Everything in the sunlight was of dazzling brightness, while the shadows were inky-black.

The moon, earth, and sun may be classed as three stages of development as well as of size. The sun's fire has not cooled enough to form a crust; the earth still has a core of fire, but has partly cooled; and the moon's fire has gone out. The temperature at the moon's surface is that of outer space, or absolute zero, while that of the sun is greater than any known heat. If the moon were placed within a hundred thousand miles of the sun, it would not merely melt, but would be turned into a gaseous nebula. The moon is only 240,000 miles from the earth, while the sun is over 93,000,000; and again the moon's diameter is about 1/433 of the sun's, so their difference in size can be easily seen.

Just before leaving the moon we witnessed one of the weirdest spectacles that have ever been seen. I was hurrying back to our machine, when I was suddenly surprised to see a great sphere looming up over the horizon of the moon; for some time I was at a loss to know what it was—so great was its bulk. But I soon realized that it was the earth rising above the moon. There being no atmosphere on the moon, I could see the earth with great clearness. North and South America were plainly visible except where they were obscured by little patches of shimmering mist, which I took to be large cloud banks. The continents shone a dull white, and the oceans were black, but our oxygen was running low, so we had to enter our car and postpone watching the earth rise till some other trip.

## 2. Filling Our Baskets

When I woke up on that September morning, I knew that we were going to have an ideal day's fishing, as there had been rain for two days, and now there was not a trace of a cloud in the sky. It did not take us long to get everything together for the trip, to eat our breakfast, and to saddle our horses; and in less than thirty minutes after I woke up we were traveling with all possible speed for Gem Lake.

As soon as we had arrived at our destination and had got our

fishing tackle ready, we shoved off from shore in a small rowboat and rowed as fast as we could to the farther end of the lake, which is about two miles long. The fishing was good from the start, and in less than five minutes we had three good-sized trout in the bottom of the boat. Of course, this luck did not stay with us all the time, but at the end of three hours' fishing we had a mess of trout which well satisfied us for our trouble in coming. My friend was especially well pleased, as he had caught the largest trout he had ever caught in his life, and probably the largest one that had ever been caught in that lake.

After we had had our dinner, we fished for a few hours longer and increased the number of our fish, but never caught one anywhere near as large as the one my friend had caught. Finally, as darkness was approaching, we decided we had better hurry home. When we came to count the fish, some time later, we found that we had fifty trout, and not one of them was under nine inches. The fishing had been fine, but we decided, after we had cleaned them all, that the best fun in the world was not cleaning fish.

### 3. The Farm

To us, plodding our way wearily through the snow storm, a light from the window of a farm-house is indeed a welcome sight. From the barn another light, that seems to be trying in vain to rival the brilliance of the one in the house, may be faintly seen. These two seem to extend a friendly hand of welcome to us, inviting us to stop and share the warmth of the fireside.

Let us turn our eyes to the picture of the barnyard. As is generally the case, the barn and silo are rather elaborate and well built, while the house is very simple. Built of reinforced concrete, the tall silo looks like a watch-tower of the medieval times. Next to this may be seen the outline of the huge barn, on top of which are the ever-present lightning rods and weather-cock. Not far from the barn is the hen-house, which is clothed in a thick, white blanket of snow. The hush of the scene is only broken by the neighing of a horse, the barking of a dog, or the creaking of the wind-mill.

Not far from the barn is a low, white building of the old colonial style. In the rear of the house is a small shed in which are stored wood, hickory-nuts, tools, and shoe-blackening. There are two porches on the house, which are for different purposes. The one which is at the front of the house is the most common entrance; the other is the side porch, which is used only on certain occasions, because it leads to the seldom-used parlor.

The green shutters are closed on all windows except the one from which the light is shining out. Let us look through this window upon a family scene. We see a typical "sitting room," common in most farm-houses. Although it is not furnished in the best of taste, it seems to have an atmosphere of comfort, which is all that the owner desires. A huge fireplace, that throws out cheer to the remotest corner of the room, is on one side. A nickel-plated heater is opposite this, and thus the two make the place warm in spite of the weather out of doors. On the table in the middle of the room there are an old family Bible, a red plush-covered photograph album, and a much worn copy of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. On the walls are pictures of relatives long dead, an old clock, and a big calendar.

Let us also turn our attention to the figures in this room. Of course the farmer is seated in the choicest chair, reading his latest copy of *The Agriculturalist*. Rocking back and forth is the farmer's wife, mending industriously the socks of her family. Poring over *Swiss Family Robinson*, which he knows almost by heart, is the fifteen-year-old son. In front of the fire is the little baby daughter, who is playing with a good-natured collie. While the storm rages outside, all is peace and contentment within.

#### 4. The Arrival of the Fleet

A few days before Christmas the fleet returned from service. All New York was lining the river to see them come in. The huge battleships were in the center, as the water was deepest there. On each side were destroyers, chasers, and all other ships necessary to a great fleet. The battleships had strings of gay flags strung from one mast to the other. These formed a sharp contrast to the dark, somber color of the great boats. Very many little boats were rushing in and out at full speed.

A few hours later we went on board a small motor-boat, and set out to see the flagship. When I mounted the ladder, the first thing that struck me was the cleanness and neatness of everything. The ropes were neatly coiled on deck, the canvas and the gangplank were as white as snow, and the men were very neat. A friendly marine offered to show us around. He showed us the mine-cutters and the guns. Then we went to the galley. The huge mixing-machines for making bread were on one side; the other was taken up by the stoves. There was a little gun, an exact model of the big one, hanging on the wall near a five-inch gun. This is used in target practice. When we went on deck again, I went forward to look at the anchor chains. Each link was about eight inches long and about an inch thick.

Then we took the launch from 96th Street to 79th. We passed several cleverly painted destroyers which at a distance were quite indistinct. One of these was painted in such a manner that one could not tell where it began and where it stopped. We saw also the hospital ship with its huge red crosses.

### 5. The Wreck of the Limited

With a grinding of brakes the train came to a violent stop. People were thrown from their berths, and everyone was awakened by the sudden shock. Immediately everyone wished to know what was the cause of all the disturbance; however, we had not long to wait, for a brakeman, standing in the end of the car, announced that there was a wreck ahead of us and called for volunteers to help rescue the people pinned beneath it. I immediately dressed and went to the scene of the catastrophe. Never shall I forget the sight. The first section of the Bar Harbor Express had stopped for some unknown reason, and the White Mountain Express, running at ninety miles an hour, had run into the standing train.

The gray morning fog added to the weirdness of the scene. In one place a sleeping-car was standing on end, while the flames ran up inside it as up a chimney. At the side of the track lay three cars through which the on-rushing locomotive had passed as if they were match-wood, and now they very closely resembled the above-mentioned wood, for one half of the cars lay on one side of the track, the other half on the other side. Everywhere the train-crews were helping wounded persons to the fields beside the tracks and looking among the debris for those who had not enough strength to help themselves.

The morning sun rose on a gruesome sight. The wrecking-crews had arrived from New Haven, and the great crane had already swung the overturned locomotive into the ditch, where it would be out of the way. Now the work for the undertakers began, for under the wrecked engine were sixty corpses, all that was left of the careful of young boys that had left Kineo the afternoon before. The crews soon recovered all the mangled bodies, and, after the twisted wreckage that had once been cars had been got out of the way, one track was opened, and the traffic of the railroad moved on once more. We on the second section had nothing to complain about even if we did arrive in New York three hours late, when we considered how lucky we were not to have been in the first section of the Express.

### 6. When We Sing "America"

The assembly-room of the School, a spacious room on the second floor, rang loudly with the opening lines of "My country, 'tis of

thee." The voices of the girls rang long and clearly, echoing from one end of the place to the other with such violence as to almost sway the chandeliers suspended from the high ceiling. Everybody, standing with head erect, was singing for all she was worth.

The second verse started; the voices hesitated, wavered, and decreased their volume. In the balcony on the front wall of the room Miss Chapin's head is seen bobbing to and fro while she is banging on the piano as if to make up for the lessening of noise from the girls. Standing on a raised platform is Miss Endicott, singing as loudly as she can to cover up the wavering of the girls, while lined up before her are the teachers, each with a loud noise issuing from her lips, as she tries to keep up with Miss Endicott and Miss Chapin.

There is a great difference in the rear, however. Scarcely a sound comes forth, and it almost seems as though the faculty were giving a solo. The pupils, mumbling and gasping out some words, make a miserable attempt to keep up. Some of the really patriotic girls are still with the tune when the third verse begins, but the majority are silent. The number of singers grows fewer, and again there is a hesitation, while the teachers go merrily on. The vim is gone; girls are leaning against the walls and the desks, as if too weak to move. Some are even leaning on the chair-backs, their mouths shut and a bored expression on their faces, as they wait patiently for the end of the song.

The last verse begins. Girls brighten up and come out, with a good loud "Our fathers' God, to Thee." The spirit has changed, because some of them know the words of the song. Everyone gets into the music with real gusto except the teachers, who by this time are about worn out. With everyone standing erect beside her desk, the last line, "Great God, our King" rings out clear and loud, and—bang! the girls pull out their books, slam desk covers, and rush out of the room to class.

## V. ORAL DESCRIPTIONS

It is often advisable to prepare a brief outline on a small piece of paper, to be held in the hand while you are giving an oral composition. A full outline is likely to distract a speaker by causing him to look at his paper instead of at his audience, thus making him recite haltingly. If the composition has been properly prepared, the speaker will not need many reminders. A list of three or four topics, indicating what might be the paragraphs, is a safeguard against forgetting, and thus gives confidence.

Pure description—that is, the making of a mental picture, like “a sunrise” or “a skyscraper” or “my room”—is a difficult piece of oral work. A gifted speaker usually attempts pure description only in brief passages, and then must warm to his work if he is to hold an audience. But if there is an element of life and motion in a subject, it comes within the range of oral composition for the classroom. “A fire” or “when the train was late” may be good topics for description.

The most common danger is the failure to realize that a beautiful or extraordinary scene has no power of its own to pass from our brain to other people's brains. We ourselves must do all the conveying of the impression. If we rely on the adjectives “beautiful” or “extraordinary,” little is told. We must summon out of our memory “the hard, bright blue of the lake within the black wall of the three-thousand-foot mountains” or “the clang of the bell that made a woman shriek.” Good oral description is always, in some form or other, a process of selecting the items that made an impression upon us, and then speaking of those.

A student need never spend much time in hunting for a subject, since he could in a short while think of many suitable topics. If anyone doubts his ability to do this, let him read the following short list and consider how rapidly he could extend it if he were to receive a dollar for every addition made within an hour.

Prepare three-minute talks on the following topics or on similar ones of your own choosing.

**1. Miscellaneous common experiences:**

- |                           |                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. When the storm came.   | e. In the dentist's chair.    |
| b. When I was frightened. | f. The neighbor's parrot.     |
| c. On a windy corner.     | g. The dog retrieving sticks. |
| d. A dream.               | h. Troubles with a pen.       |

**2. Character sketches.** Most students can succeed, if they really try, in making some such character sketch as these:

- a. The crafty clerk dealing with different customers.
- b. The conductor in a crowded car.
- c. An unpopular umpire.



- d. A vaudeville favorite.
- e. The practical joker who can't take a joke.
- f. The lazy ditch-diggers.

Plan your series of encounters or actions or bits of dialogue; select the one that will be most fitting as a conclusion. A large part of the total effect will depend upon how you end.

**3. Detailed observation.** (1) If you decided to do the engraving for a counterfeit dollar-bill, you would be astonished at the details you would have to copy. Have you ever thought of what a bill is like? (2) A car-load of people on a railroad train rise and prepare to leave long before the train stops; their actions are often amusing; perhaps the philosophical person who does not stand up ahead of time is the one to close with. (3) A great variety of marvels can be observed in a drop of water under a microscope. (4) You could carefully study a description of the human heart, and then report on it. (5) Finger-prints have been interesting objects for many observers. (6) Have you ever noticed what a complicated series of activities your tongue goes through when you pronounce a word? Try the word *thoughtful*; try slowly; try repeatedly.

**4. What you like to talk about.** Every normal human being likes to talk. Have you ever thought how apt you are to grow restless while some friend is telling of an experience? You want your turn. Notice what you like to tell; perhaps topics for composition will be found.

**5. "Competition is the life of trade"**—and so it may be of oral description. If two classes (or, better, two divisions of one class) are rival camps, each selecting representatives to visit the other class and speak before it, there may be a surprising increase of interest in oral themes. That is a stimulating "project"; it means improvement.

Describing petty matters as a class exercise may not seem like serious preparation for life. Yet it always will be if the student's heart is in his effort. It is the earnest doing of one's best, no matter with what subject, that cultivates power.

## VI. WRITTEN DESCRIPTIONS

Most topics suitable for oral description are equally good for written themes. Some topics of a different sort are added here as an indication of how wide the field of choice is. In developing such subjects as the following try to concentrate on

one quality or feeling; choose specific words that increase the one feeling; bring all your items or episodes to bear on the "restfulness" or "turmoil" or "great height," or whatever you are emphasizing. One of the best ways to increase the force of description is giving a contrast—for example, emphasize "how proud I felt" by first picturing "how hopeless I had been before."

A writer's mind is often better focused on his subject, and his description therefore clearer, if he writes in the form of a letter to an acquaintance.

Write 300-word themes on topics like the following:

1. That glorious feeling.
2. My weariest hour.
3. Being very thirsty.
4. The cold ride.
5. Feeling utterly insignificant.
6. Perfectly bewildered.
7. Lost.
8. Just before you go to sleep.
9. She couldn't make up her mind.
10. The dog that always worries.

## CHAPTER IV

### PLANNING AN EXPOSITION

#### A. STUDY OF GOOD EXAMPLES

“Exposition” is the kind of writing that explains something. It answers such questions as “How does this work?” “What is the cause?” “How is it done?” Exposition often contains a narrative element and usually employs description, but its purpose is not to tell a story or present a scene; its purpose is “to explain the nature of.” For example, this paragraph about the merino sheep, though mostly descriptive, is written to show “what the cause of the value is.”

#### **The Merino Sheep**

The merino sheep is, so to speak, all fleece. His coat hangs loosely on his body, and its folds provide a great amount of space for wool; whereas the old, unimproved German sheep had 5500 hairs per square inch, the merino has 40,000; and he has a good many square inches to have his thousands on. And this fleece weighs him down to such an extent that he cannot leap fences and do damage as his longer-legged and less handicapped fellows can. . . . The superiority of the merino lies in the fineness of the wool and in the amount or weight of wool for each individual fleece. The wool is so close as to enable the sheep to endure very cold weather; this ability to resist the cold and to live on the coarsest food, combined with an unequalled docility, has made the merino very satisfactory wherever it has been imported.

Bishop and Keller, *Industry and Trade*

Observe that the details in the above paragraph are not set down as a mere row of items, but as an orderly whole: (1) why the merino has so much more wool, (2) how this great quantity of wool prevents his doing damage, (3) the fineness of the wool and (4) how this fineness makes the sheep hardy, (5) how this

hardiness, combined with the docility of item 2, makes the sheep satisfactory everywhere. Each statement is linked to what goes before and prepares for what follows: the whole series, instead of concluding by chance with a fifth item, ends with a more general truth that includes the previous items. At the close we feel that we have arrived somewhere.

The following passage, which starts as pure description of a whale's mouth, soon announces that we are to be told about "the object of" this curious arrangement. The paragraphs explain a process of getting food.

### Whalebone

The "right" whale has no teeth like the sperm whale. In place of teeth it has the well-known substance called whalebone, which grows from the roof of its mouth, in a number of broad, thin plates, extending from the back of the head to the snout. The lower edges of these plates of whalebone are split into thousands of hairs like bristles, so that the inside roof of a whale's mouth resembles an enormous blacking-brush. The object of this curious arrangement is to enable the whale to catch the little shrimps and small sea-blubbers, called "medusae," on which it feeds. When he desires a meal, he opens his great mouth and rushes into the midst of a shoal of medusae; the little things get entangled in thousands among the hairy ends of the whalebone, and when the monster has got a large enough mouthful, he shuts his lower jaw and swallows what his net has caught.

The wisdom as well as the necessity of this arrangement is very plain. Of course, while dashing through the sea in this fashion, with his mouth agape, the whale must keep his throat closed, else the water would rush down it and choke him. Shutting his throat, then, as he does, the water is obliged to flow out of his mouth as fast as it flows in; it is also spouted up through his blow-holes, and this with such violence that many of the little creatures would be swept out along with it but for the hairy-ended whalebone which lets the sea-water out, but keeps the medusae in.

R. M. Ballantyne, *Fighting the Whale*

One device of this author deserves special notice: after he has given us the facts about the roof of the whale's mouth, he *compares it* to a blacking-brush. It often happens that a whole

page of bare facts gives less understanding than one line of comparison to some homely object that we know about.

The writer does not end with any chance statement, but with the conclusion of an operation: "keeps the medusae in."

The next exposition, how a spider begins its web, follows a time order strictly.

### Beginning to Make a Web

How do you suppose Mrs. Spider manages to carry her thread from one support to another? She cannot jump across, for the distance is too great, and she has no wings with which to fly. While you and I have been puzzling ourselves over it, she has set to work, for she knows exactly what to do. She takes for her starting point that low twig which she has already covered with a network of threads, her back down, her spinnerets upward and extending outward from her body as far as possible. For a moment she keeps perfectly quiet, waiting for something very important to happen.

A slight breeze gently stirs the threads. Ah, that is what she is waiting for. See! she is sending out a stream of silk from her spinnerets. How the filmy threads glitter in the light of our lamp! For a few minutes she allows the breeze to carry the threads far out from the spinning machine; then with a quick movement she makes the thread fast by touching her spinnerets to the twig. Again she quietly waits, but this time she has turned her head in the direction in which the threads blew. If we look closely, we see that she is holding one of the threads with the claw of her front foot. From the foot the thread stretches to the hooks on her palps [mouth-parts] and from these down the middle line of her body to the spinnerets. She is patiently waiting for the free end of the line to catch on some support. Every now and then she pulls gently on the slack thread, and with her palps rolls a portion of it into a small, white ball, as a fisherman winds up his line when he hauls it in. At last the line pulls taut, and she seems satisfied that it is fixed at the farther end.

Just where that may be she does not know, but she is ready to start on an exploring expedition to find out. Never did tight-rope walker perform a more daring feat. With back down and head forward she glides along the frail, swaying thread, walking with six feet, while with the last pair she holds tense the new thread that she is spinning. She speeds along so rapidly that you are half inclined to believe that she is floating through the air instead of running along on an almost invisible thread.

She has reached that drooping leaf, ten feet away from her starting point. She pauses an instant to fasten her new thread, and then glides back, adding another strand to her silk rope. She repeats this several times, till the line is strong enough to bear her weight without swaying.\*

An author who told about these spinning operations in a matter-of-fact way would not direct our attention so well to the marvels of the process. If we hear of "something important to happen," "patiently waiting," "a more daring feat," we feel a more human interest and get a more correct idea of the skill shown in web-making.

Everything in nature is full of zest and interest to the imaginative mind. Such a mind instinctively uses lively pictures when explaining, in order to convey a true understanding. For we should give a wrong impression—or no impression at all—if we described fearful speed and heat in terms of mere dead figures. So when Sir Robert S. Ball told his young friends about meteoroids (in *Star-land*), he took pains to prepare their minds by saying that we live "at the bottom of a great ocean of air," and vividly showed how dense this air is by speaking of a cannon-ball "boring its way through." Then he proceeded with statements like these:

### A Shooting-Star

So long as a little shooting-star is tearing away through open space, we are not able to see it. The largest telescope in the world would not reveal a glimpse of anything so small. . . . For ages and ages the meteoroid has been moving freely through space. The speed with which it dashes along greatly exceeds that of any motions with which we are familiar. It is about 100 times as swift as the pace of a rifle bullet. About twenty miles would be covered in a second. . . . When the little body, after rejoicing in the freedom of open space, dashes into air, immediately it experiences a terrific resistance; it has to force the particles of air out of the way. . . . It would be possible for the shooting-star to gain 10,000 degrees of heat by the tremendous friction, and this would be enough to melt and boil away any object which ever existed. . . . The whole

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\* From *The Spinner Family* by Alice G. Patterson, published by A. C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, Illinois.

brilliance of the shooting-star is due simply to friction. As the little body dashes through the air, it becomes first red-hot, then white-hot, until at last it is melted and turned into vapor. Thus is formed that glowing streak which we, standing very many miles below, see as a shooting-star.

Sir Robert has made us feel the excitement of this affair; he has told us a kind of "story" of a dead and aimless little cold mass that flares up in its moment of brilliant death. The "story" effect is often worth trying for in exposition, not simply because it makes an account more entertaining, but because it rouses us to a realization of the facts.

There is another even stronger reason for using a narrative form when explaining something: we more naturally follow a time order, a "straight line" of development, which is so useful to a reader. So important is the device in oral or written composition that Chapter I was devoted entirely to that matter. Such a topic as "the breeding of salmon" might be confusing, and we might not realize the facts, unless it was presented as a "straight line" narrative, proceeding clear through from one beginning to the next beginning of the endless series of propagation.

### How Salmon Live and Die

The life story of the Pacific salmon is of dramatic interest, containing all the elements of romance—from its first fight for existence against almost overwhelming odds to its magnificent struggle to perpetuate its race at the expense of its own existence.

The fish is an anadrom, living all but the beginning and end of its life in the depths of the ocean. During his sojourn in the salt water he evidently finds feeding good and life generally worth while, for by the time he is four years old he has developed into a magnificent fish weighing from thirty to even a hundred pounds, and as handsome a creature as the water ever produced.

The tragedy of his life comes when nature calls him to the spawning grounds. Every springtide the mature salmon begin in great schools the return journey. They travel to the headwaters of the rivers, many hundreds of miles up. No natural obstacles can stop the pilgrims; they leap obstructing bowlders and charge the rapids with indomitable energy, renewing and redoubling their efforts if

repulsed, until they have won their progress onward or die in the struggle. They take no food after entering fresh water.

When they finally reach the spawning grounds—weak from fasting and fatigue and often wounded by the rocks and other obstacles—they rest for two or three weeks. Then each female fish scoops a hole in the gravel in the shallow water and deposits her eggs there. The fish have completed the duty to nature which they undertook when they left their ocean homes.

And then? By this time they have lost the strength and beauty which distinguished them when they started on their journey: their glistening scales have disappeared; their flesh is flabby and dull; their skin is disfigured with blotches; they linger around for a while, and then they die.

From the eggs, after a hundred or two hundred days, emerge the "fry," tiny creatures of queer aspect, which develop into little salmon that travel down the river into the ocean—a long journey, slowly made, with many stops, with heavy toll to enemies along the route, thence into the ocean, there to live and fight and grow until, in their turn, as they reach maturity, they make the final up-river journey.

Artemas Ward, *The Encyclopedia of Food*

A mere dry statement of the facts would not have given us any such idea of the breeding. Here we have felt the "dramatic interest," have seen the "indomitable energy" and the "enemies along the route"; we realize the process as a stirring life history. We may not always be able to inject "dramatic interest" into a school composition; mere matter-of-fact exactness is a virtue to be cultivated. We may go farther and say that a writer who is not imaginative may spoil a theme by a false straining after the "vivid" or "dramatic." But the ordinary school writer has more imagination than he thinks; he should discover and use all that he has, trying always to keep his composition from being a dead mass of facts.

Of course we cannot always find excitement or dramatic interest in the subjects that we have to explain. But there is, more often than we suppose, some element of human interest, some chance to enliven by making comparisons. Take a rather extreme case, "selling short" in the stock market. A stock-broker once faced the task of explaining this intricate financial opera-



tion in such a way that we people who never owned a share of stock could clearly understand it. To us it is a dead topic, but to him it is a human game, a kind of contest in which shrewd men have need of all their nerve and judgment. The broker chose to begin with a challenge to his readers, telling them how mysterious this "bearish" operation is.

#### What Is a "Bear"?

The operation of "bears" in the great speculative markets and the practice of "selling short" are riddles which the layman but dimly comprehends. Buying in the hope of selling at a profit is simple enough; but an Œdipus is required to solve the enigma of selling what one does not possess, and of buying it at a profit after the price has cheapened. It is the most complicated of all ordinary commercial transactions.

As a preparatory lesson: suppose a speculator buys from a commission merchant a carload of coal of a specified grade. The coal is not in the possession of the commission merchant, but he knows where he can get it, and he knows that he can deliver it on the date agreed upon.

Now suppose the same purchaser wishes to buy 100 shares of Pennsylvania Railroad stock. The dealer to whom he applies does not happen to have 100 Pennsylvania on hand, but he knows where he can get it, and he knows that he can deliver it to the purchaser on the following day. . . . He may, if he chooses, go into the open market and buy the stock at once, so that he will be able to deliver it in the easiest and most direct way.

Or he may feel that by waiting he may be able to buy at a lower price than that at which he has sold it; hence, in order to make the delivery promptly, he *borrow*s the hundred shares from one of his colleagues, with whom he deposits the market price *as security for the temporary loan*. In a day or two the stock may have declined; whereupon the bear goes into the market and buys the 100 shares of Pennsylvania at a price, say, of one per cent lower than that at which he sold it.

When the shares are delivered to him, he delivers them in turn to the man from whom he borrowed the original 100 shares; his security money is then returned to him, and the transaction is closed.

W. C. VanAntwerp, *The Stock Exchange from Within*

Two of Mr. VanAntwerp's devices are the most common and necessary in all ordinary exposition. In the first place, he does

not allow our minds to stay in a hazy region of "certificates" and "depositing to cover"; he takes us promptly to a car of coal, to a thing that we already know about. This way of comparing with something that a reader understands is often the only easy method of explaining clearly. We generally use this in talking to a friend when we are trying to make clear a situation or process that he has never seen; we say, "It's just like pumping water" or "You know how a cat's tail grows big when she's angry." A good comparison is often half the battle in exposition.

In the second place, Mr. VanAntwerp is very careful to follow a time order. He first puts clearly before us an ordinary transaction of promising to deliver coal, then supposes that this same kind of promise is given for railroad stock, then describes *borrowing* the stock to fulfill the promise, then describes the later purchase of stock in the open market *at a lower price*, then the *return of the loan*. If there had been the least shift or "backtracking" in this time order, the reader would have been perplexed. A person who has to explain how to play dominoes or how to make coffee will always do well to think of a narrative form of putting the events one after the other in actual sequence, of presenting the "story" of a process. Indeed the longer one writes and reads exposition, the more he believes that the first requisite is a careful time order.

Students are apt to think that a readable exposition is interesting because the subject is interesting, and they therefore excuse their own failures by saying, "I don't know any good subject to write about." The fact is usually just the opposite: most students do understand subjects that could be so written up as to entertain a class, but they fail to seize the details that human beings want to read about. No subject is good or bad in itself. A hill of potatoes can be made to light up a written page, but the liveliest meteoroid will remain dull, if a writer fails to supply heat and light. Thoughtless or lazy management of details will spoil the best subject.

## B. STUDY OF FAILURES

Four typical failures in exposition follow. The first one fails because the writer makes no effort to explain anything to a reader. Since he himself knows all about wireless outfits and is interested in them, he takes it for granted that all he needs to do is to set down the names of things. His writing is not a true theme, but a mere display of technical terms.

### A Receiving Set

The most important part of a receiving set is a detector and its phones. The latter cannot be made and are better purchased. The former is made by fastening a small piece of wire to an iron support about six inches long. At the end of this, solder a piece of very thin wire, such as one off a mandolin. The purpose of this is to make a contact with a mineral (silicon, galena, or any of the many others), which is placed on the base on which the steel support is fastened. This is the detector. In a pinch a small potato may be substituted to receive for very short distances. This is due to the electrolytic action. A small-capacity condenser helps to amplify the signals and is made by two small sheets of tin-foil separated by a sheet of paraffin. The contraption is pressed together tightly, and a wire is attached to each of the tin-foil sheets. In order to enable the operator to "tune" a station, or to lengthen his aerial to the same length as the sender, a loop-coupler is needed. A simple one is constructed by winding one layer of number twenty-six B & S wire around a cardboard tube about five inches long and three and a half in width.

The second composition partially fails for the opposite reason: the writer resolved not to be prosy and technical. He had heard about a "story effect" in exposition, and so started out with some lively introductory dialogue. This ran away with him until it had led him through a third of his space. Then we get a pretty good account of "how to make a lemonade stand" in the next third. At this point another subject appears—"where not to put the stand." In the last paragraph there is a sudden, and somewhat tragic, change of situation: a more knowing rival has appeared, and our financial hopes have gone a-glimmering. The composition has turned into a story—which is an entirely dif-

ferent matter from explaining, "by a story method," how to make a lemonade emporium.

### The Unfortunate Lemonade Stand

"Are you hard up?" I asked of my next-door neighbor one hot day in June.

"You bet I am. Why do you ask me, though?" he retorted.

"I've got a scheme," I said, "of how to make some money."

"Let's hear it," replied Tom and Jack. Jack was another neighbor, who had just arrived in time to hear my last remark.

"Let's make a lemonade stand," I said.

The question was settled by some exclamations and assertions from my friends, and we all ran to the cellar for material.

"You'll find about four empty barrels in that room over there," I said, pointing to an adjacent room. "Each of you bring out two, and I'll get some boards."

As there was a fine place for the stand under a tree in front of Tom's house, we decided to build it there.

The barrels were set up about six feet apart in such a position as to form a square. From each barrel the boards, which I had carried to the spot, were placed on top for a counter. Instead of nailing boards on the side, two or three sheets, found in Jack's house, were used. One side of the square was left open for entering.

After finding some bright-colored paint, we set to work to print signs of every description. We were soon interrupted by the dinner bell, so the signs weren't finished until afterwards. Then we carried them to the stand.

Alas! The sun, in the meantime, had changed its position. The stand, which had been sheltered by a tree, was in the burning sun now. Since it was useless to try to sell lemonade in the sun, the stand had to be moved. Fortunately a shady place was found near by. After working for quite a while moving it, the stand was again in the shade.

On looking down the street we saw another lemonade stand. This was on the main thoroughfare, so our stand would be of no use. A day's work had been wasted.

That theme is not a poor one. In fact as an exposition of "the difficulties of the lemonade market," or as a story of "the lemonade financiers," it may be called good. But it is not the explanation that the author set out to write. He was turned

aside—just as high-school authors frequently are—by his instinct for writing a little romance about “something that happened one day.”

The third failure is typical of what an intelligent and well-informed student may do if he has had no training in outlining and following a straight line of development. As you read it, notice the places where the time order shifts unreasonably; in the fourth paragraph notice the skipping from England to America. Read it a second time to observe what the order of topics is.

### The Industrial Revolution

Of all the important events in history the Industrial Revolution is perhaps the most important, for it utterly changed the lives of the masses of all countries.

This revolution was begun in England in the first part of the nineteenth century. It was started principally because there was a need for better ways of working.

The conditions in Europe before this Revolution were really not any better than they had been for hundreds of years before. There had been no advance whatsoever. The same crude farming implements were used that had been used centuries before by the Egyptians. There was no steam, no electricity, and very little water was used for power. Everything was done by hand and done very crudely. There was really a need for something better.

So in England improvements were first made in farming. Then soon afterwards the methods of transportation were improved. Canals began to be made, forests were cut down, swamps drained, and better roads made. Then the revolution in manufacturing came. First the spinning-wheel was so improved that it could spin about two hundred threads instead of one. Then the weaving-looms were bettered. The shuttle was made to work automatically, while before it had been worked by hand. Then Eli Whitney invented the cotton-gin, so that more cotton could be spun. The next great step was the invention of steam, for then it was possible for Robert Fulton to invent the steamboat and for Stephenson to invent the steam-engine. After this, all during the past century, there have been other smaller inventions, and the majority of them have been made by Americans.

Of course this Revolution, as it took place in England, changed England first; and as the other countries of Europe did not feel its results for many years after, they have had entirely different industrial

conditions. At present, however, the conditions are essentially the same.

As you read the fourth failure, answer the following questions: (1) Of what use are the first two paragraphs? (2) How important, as an explanation of distilling, is the third paragraph? (3) Do you know, after reading the fourth paragraph, how the water did pass from one jar to the other? (4) Does this laboratory apparatus explain "the great distilleries" in the fifth paragraph? (5) Have you any remarks to make on the last paragraph?

### Distilling Water

1. When water is brought in to dinner in fine cut glass upon silver trays, few people ever think of the various processes through which it has been before it is fit to drink. I never dreamed of these processes until one day I happened to be present while they were taking place.

2. My brother was studying chemistry, and he was required to make a certain number of "experiments." One of them was to distil water, and so that is how I happened to see how the distilling was done.

3. First some water was drawn from the tap. It looked clear enough to me, and I would gladly have taken some to drink. But no, it was not hygienic, and I must wait until the water should be distilled. Then it was poured into a large jar with an air-tight top. Out of the top there was a long glass tube which reached nearly to the ceiling. The end of this tube was connected by a rubber joint with another glass tube, about eight feet long, which reached nearly all the way across the laboratory, parallel to the floor. The end of that tube was also connected by a rubber joint to another tube of the same length. This one extended back across the room, but not in a parallel to the floor, for it was on a slant of about thirty degrees. From its end the last glass tube slanted to the opposite side of the room, where it ended in an empty air-tight jar.

4. A flame was placed under the jar containing the water, and a jar of cracked ice was placed outside the empty jar. I stood by and watched the so-called process, but I was disappointed to see nothing unusual happening. After a long, long time a few drops of water began to drip from the end of the tube into the "empty jar." Slowly, slowly, drop by drop, the water came into the jar. I looked at the

other jar. How the water in it had diminished! Where had it all gone? It had evaporated, it seems, and, becoming light, it had risen through the tubes and passed through until it reached the jar enclosed in packed ice. There it had condensed and dripped down into the jar.

5. It had taken a long time, and when my brother disconnected the apparatus, there was only enough distilled water to fill one tumbler. Just think! If it took all that time and all that apparatus for us to make one tumbler of distilled water, what must it take the great distilleries to supply hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people?

6. I was allowed to drink some of the water, but after all I think there is nothing like a cool, refreshing forest stream.

### C. EXPOSITION IN REAL LIFE

In real life there is a constant demand for exposition that sticks to the subject, that follows some straight line, that conveys a live understanding in a human way. Engineers and physicians and agents and manufacturers are frequently required to explain what the rest of us do not understand, and we are not enlightened by a mere row of data; we want illustration and animated comment that lead to a clear solution of one puzzle. Ministers and editors get nowhere if they depend on setting up a row of prosy facts; we demand that they exhibit their whys and hows in a way that appeals to our minds. Scientific and technical schools know that there is a better outlook for students who can give a clear exposition. All business men—especially when they advertise—are students of the art of exposition, because they must forever be showing how certain goods are better, or how a customer has been fairly treated, or how their dealings are right. The ordinary business letter is an exposition; if it is merely a dull array of flat statements, it may cause a loss of money; if it makes an interesting appeal, it brings good results. All that we hear nowadays about “the human touch” in business correspondence shows the demand for better exposition—that is, for explaining more clearly the real purposes and feelings of the persons who send the letters.

**Clarity is the key to all successful exposition: Remember that**

you, a human being, are trying to be clear and interesting to some other human being.

#### D. OUTLINES FOR EXPOSITION

[Additional hints for planning exposition are given in Chapter XXIV.]

Any subject like "the growing and marketing of oranges" is too large for an ordinary short composition, but is suitable for an occasional longer one, say of a thousand words. In preparing for one of these longer efforts the student will do well to map his plan in advance, else he may find that he has written five hundred words before the oranges are picked, and so will have to crowd the rest of his information into a third of the space it ought to have. An outline insures proper proportion.

#### The Orange Industry

- I. Orchard.
  - 1. Planting.
  - 2. Irrigating.
  - 3. One orange from bud to full size on the tree.
- II. Picking.
- III. Packing.
  - 1. The packing house.
  - 2. Cleaning.
  - 3. Sorting.
  - 4. Boxing.
- IV. Shipping.
- V. Growers' association for marketing.
- VI. Consumed.
  - 1. The fruit-stand.
  - 2. The breakfast table.

For briefer compositions the following type of outline is usually more helpful. The writer who sees from the outset that he has four topics to develop will not allow one of them to bulge beyond its proper limits. He also knows that he is to have either



four or five paragraphs; or, if he decides upon a sixth paragraph, he will know the reason.

### Why a Scratch Is Dangerous

- I. Three deadly germs.
  1. "Lock-jaw" and two kinds of "blood-poisoning."
  2. Dormant and helpless.
- II. They breed in contact with flesh.
- III. Nature's army against them in the blood.
- IV. Antiseptic promptly.

In the case of a more analytical subject an outline helps a writer by showing what his logical sequence is; it shows him that the first topic must lead up to the second, and that then the second must follow naturally. The troubles and tangles that we are involved in while thinking out details will become a straight line of reasoned progress if we see the principal steps before us in an outline. Suppose, for example, that you undertook to explain "finding the longitude." It is a difficult subject. You have to read and consult and think before it is clear in your own mind. You find that your principal difficulty was that you had never thought of how different longitude is from latitude, and you therefore decide to approach an explanation by that route. (The fractions show about what portion of the whole theme each division is to occupy.)

### Finding the Longitude

- I. ( $\frac{1}{6}$ ) Latitude, to clear up confusion.
  1. Defined.
  2. Found by observing the sun.
- II. ( $\frac{1}{6}$ ) Longitude.
  1. Defined.
  2. Not to be found by observation.
- III. ( $\frac{3}{6}$ ) Longitude found by time.
  1. Difference from the time of the zero meridian.
  2. Accurate chronometers.
  3. Reckoning.

Indicating what portion of your time in speaking (or of space in writing) is to be used for each division is a good safeguard in exposition. If the fractions are staring at us, we shall not find ourselves two-thirds of the way through before we have completed an introductory illustration.

## EXERCISES

### I. OUTLINES

Write outlines of the following themes.

### II. ANALYSIS OF THEMES

[Additional material for work of this sort is provided in Part Six.]

Write specific criticisms of the ways in which the following compositions succeed or fail as explanations. One is very poor; none is remarkably good. Analyzing these ordinary products of school authorship is more profitable than working with the writing of skilled professionals, for these themes are on our own level and are examples of the ways in which we ourselves may fail or succeed. The student who gives them close scrutiny, discovering the specific faults and merits, will find that he has gathered some useful ideas to guide him in writing his next exposition.

#### 1. Building a Cabin

One June morning six of my friends and I began to dig into the side of the hill near its top. We dug in for about four feet, putting the dirt on the downward side, to level it off. By using lots of good-sized stones lying about we soon had a strong foundation.

On the afternoon of the same day we began the framework. By nailing the beams to the surrounding trees we made it somewhat irregular in outline, but, nevertheless, very strong.

With two working on a side we shingled it, since we had made a platform around it all to help us in shingling the upper part and in laying on the roof. Although it was an all-day job, everybody, inspired by the fine weather, went to work with vim.

On the following morning the construction of the roof was undertaken. We took two old barn doors and strengthened them by screwing on small beams the whole length on both sides. Then we put some tar-paper on the top, to make it rainproof.

Since this had occupied all the morning, we went to work in the afternoon to lay it on. By using a block and tackle we got the first door in place and nailed securely, but the block refused to work a second time. After a long search another was found. With this we soon put the other in place. It took some time to make the crack between them so it wouldn't leak. At last, however, everything was good and watertight.

Now we had a complete cabin, except for the fire-place and window. Since we found a large number of old bricks, it wasn't difficult to make a good one, but it was very hard to get a stove-pipe placed as a chimney so the fire would draw. Since we had found a window, we had made the place for it correspondingly. Of course it was the work of only a few minutes to put it in. Our cabin was now complete.

## 2. Straightening and Tensioning Steel

Many thin slabs of steel—say, for instance, saws—come from the tempering in a state which is called a "dish," being sometimes very similar to an ordinary dish. In flattening this out the hammer can in some instances be dropped on the humps which run in toward the center. If this can't be done, or if there are no humps, begin at the very edge of the saw and work around it, placing the blows as regularly as possible. Then turn the saw over and do the same on the other side, only a little farther down.

Some of the steel may be immune to all the pounding done around the edge and will still stubbornly stick up in the center. If this is the case, it is usually "fast," which is caused by the steel being pressed up in the center by the blows on the edge, just as an ice-mass is by the wind and currents on a lake. This fastness makes the saw so that it can't be budged when it is placed on the front of the anvil with its end resting on the slide, and with its middle held on the anvil, while it is lifted at the back. In getting this fastness out the blows should be placed near the center and around in a circle.

The tensioning is a matter of getting the fastnesses out and making the saw pliable in the manner shown above. The saw must be stiffened as much as possible by tensioning before straightening, for they both go together, and without a sufficient tension the saw will go "flopping fast," as the men call it. Then all your work must be begun over again. When tensioning, pound the saw on both sides, and cover the

blows on the front side, which are indicated by spots similar to those on the back; if this is not done, it will decrease the speed of the saw.

There is a lot in not hitting the saw too hard, for it makes no end of trouble trying to get the holes out which you have put in. One rule is to decide where and how to hit and how few blows can be made to do the work.

### 3. How to Make a Paragraph

In theme-writing one of the most important things is to know how to paragraph. Each new paragraph should be indented about an inch. There is no definite length to make a paragraph, as it may be a word, and it may be four or five pages. If the subject takes on a new condition, start a new paragraph, and you will very seldom go wrong.

The reason we paragraph is to break up a long, tiresome theme of one paragraph into a number of smaller ones, so that it is more interesting and a lot easier to read. If we did not do this, it would seem more like a jumble of sentences.

Every paragraph should have a topic, and this topic must be the subject of the whole paragraph. This not only gives plainness in meaning, but it makes it a lot easier to write.

In paragraphing dialogue it is generally right to set the words of each speaker in a separate paragraph. This does not always hold true, but it is usually the case.

### 4. "The Fox"

After all the materials had been collected that were necessary for making a canoe, I started in to work on the frame. The canoe was to be about twelve feet long and two or three feet wide. Also it was to be a trick canoe, with which I could have a lot of fun at the expense of my friends. I used the best barrel hoops I could find for the ribs of the boat. These a friend of mine, who was helping me, sawed in half and selected the best twelve half-hoops. Then to a twelve-foot, limber, flat board we nailed one end of the hoops, a foot apart; the other ends were likewise nailed to another board in the same way. Still another flat board was nailed to the bottoms of the half-hoops. After this the boards were clamped together at each end, and so now the frame of the small canoe was finished.

Then came the harder work of stretching the canvas over the outside of the frame. The former was carefully cut so as to fit the boat's shape, but a little extra was left over for any necessity that

might suddenly arise. After the canvas had been tacked on one side, with great trouble and work, it was fitted smoothly over the frame. Then we nailed two boards, short and thick ones, across the top of the canoe, each being about a foot from the end. This was done so that there would not be so great a strain on the bow and stern of the canoe. The outside was painted with turpentine. Afterwards we tried the boat on the water. It was very light and floated easily.

Now came the trick-part of the boat. First three pieces of pig-iron were procured. They weighed about twenty pounds apiece. These were placed in the bottom of the canoe—separated—and a little on the side of the light craft. Then the inside also was covered with canvas, so that the pieces of iron were invisible and could not be felt through the heavy cloth. They could roll about for half a foot or so, but that was all—and they were always a little on the side of the boat. The inside, like the outside, was painted with turpentine.

The next day some boys came to the lake with me. We were all dressed in our bathing suits. One of the fellows jumped into the canoe on the side where the iron was concealed. Over and in he went. As soon as he was out, the boat righted itself. All tried—with the same result. They then claimed the boat was no good, and that no one could stand in it. I got in, but, though standing naturally, I placed my weight on the side without the iron, and so was perfectly safe. However, I did not dare to try to paddle, as the least shifting of weight would have turned me over.

For a month the boat was great fun. No one could stand in it, except this fellow and me. The other boys tried all kinds of ways, but without success, because if they got too far on the side without the iron they would go over, and one could not put any weight to speak of on the weighted side. We named the boat "The Fox."

### 5. The "Tar Baby"

One morning, a number of summers ago, one of the boys who live near me in the country came over to my house with plans for building a punt. He said that the night before he had seen the plans in the *American Boy*, and he thought that it would be some fun to make one of these craft. So we ambled out to the lumber shed, talking wildly of the rapids we were going to shoot and the six-pound trout we were going to catch in the punt. We looked over the pieces of wood and boards which we had, and then decided that we could build it with the materials we had on hand.

A punt is a long, narrow, square-ended boat which is supposed to be propelled by a long pole. These are often seen on the Thames

near London. The plans called for 16-foot boards along the sides, but we could not find any over 14½ feet long. Even that extra half foot was used up in the bend from bow to stern, although since both ends were the same size and shape, neither could be called by either name. We found too that for a number of reasons we couldn't make the boat over 24 inches wide at the widest part. However, we at last managed to get the boat together, but since we didn't have any hemp or oakum, we didn't know how to calk the seams. At last our eyes fell on an old can of tar, and we immediately gave the punt a thick coating, outside and inside, of the sticky stuff. It was foolish to do this, for whenever we sat on the boat about two weeks later we always stuck to the seat.

After waiting a few days to let the tar dry enough so we could handle the boat, we carted it down to the pond in a wheelbarrow. Then "among the shouts of the multitude" the punt is slid into the water after being christened the "Tar Baby" because of its tarry coat. We had lots of fun with it, but if we stood up in it to pole, it would capsize because of its small beam; and if we sat down to paddle, we would stick. Oh! she was a fine craft!!

## 6. A Coral Island

The earliest part of my life, that I, the shade of Jonah Polyp, can recall to mind, is when I was a little seed. As the founder of Sarax Island, which is in the South Pacific, I think I am capable of telling of the formation of that body of land. For many years I floated, and all this time I was growing, until finally I decided to abandon this care-free life and settle down to more serious things. After I had become about an eighth of an inch long, I determined to sacrifice myself and begin the formation of a monument, which might in some way profit somebody.

In the course of my sailing I one day came upon the cone of a volcano, which was at a depth of about eighty fathoms, and here I determined to begin my work. Upon the edge of the cone I fastened myself. Thus fastened to the rock I made a queer sight, which caused me to look not unlike a sea anemone, in that I had tentacles extending from my cylindrical body, which I used to grasp passing bits of food. I secreted a limy substance which hardened, and by this together with my skeleton, which was left after my shell had been washed away, coral was formed. And this performance was repeated by millions of others of us in the same way.

But, my friend, our growth was far from rapid, as we rose only a little over an inch each year. At this rate it took us about eleven

hundred years to come nearly to the surface of the water, where our labor stopped, as we could not work above water. From the bodies of countless polyyps an island had been formed.

After many years the top of the island was raised above the water by the gradual rising of the earth's surface. This island remained a barren, sandy waste, until a seed of a date tree was washed upon the shore. In this manner vegetation was begun, and before a century had passed, the island was rather thickly covered by a growth of ferns, palms, cocoanut trees, and olive trees. And now as we serve as a haven of safety for shipwrecked sailors and a scene for the action of many a novel, I consider that our sacrifice has not been made in vain, for we profit man in many ways.

### 7. A Useful Mouse Trap

The chief advantages of the form of trap which I am about to describe are that it doesn't have to be bought, nor does it have to be reset. It is also very cheap, and is a sure catcher.

If it is possible to obtain, a metal ash-can is the best; otherwise any flour barrel will do very well. In case of the latter an inside reinforcement of tin or very fine mesh wire is usually needed, since mice often gnaw through a board in a night. Some people even go so far as to fill the lined barrel with water. This makes it indeed a perfect trap, as the mouse can neither get out nor escape from being drowned. It also has the advantage of killing the mouse for you, which to many is the most undesirable part of it all. All the material now needed is a large piece of paper, a pair of scissors, a piece of cord, some glue, and four pieces of cheese.

The large piece of paper should be cut in a circle quite a little larger than the opening of the barrel. Then it should be laid flat on top of the opening, and the uppermost hoop pushed down over it. This securely clamps down the paper. Then it should be slit across twice, beginning at about four inches from the outside and cutting clear across to about four inches on the opposite side. It should be cut so that the two lines at the center shall be perpendicular. Four pieces of cheese should be glued at each central angle respectively. Now the trap is ready and should be placed in any convenient spot, with a couple of boards run up to the top.

By his keen sense of smell the mouse soon finds out where the cheese is, and immediately runs up one of the boards. He then runs out on the paper, which, if cut correctly, holds him until he has got out so far that it gives away with such suddenness that there is no chance of his getting back.

## III. TOPICS FOR EXPOSITION, ORAL AND WRITTEN

A diagram is often very helpful in exposition. Sometimes a sketch on the blackboard or a drawing in a theme conveys, quickly and clearly, what cannot be explained by a page of writing or a minute of speaking.

1. Prepare a three-minute talk (or write a 300-word letter) explaining the features of some local industry that a student in another part of the country would like to hear about. Center your attention on "What is strange to him?" "What would he most care to hear about?" Explaining to people who already know is a very easy task; the demand of real life is always to explain to a person *who does not understand*. Illustrative topics are:

- |                     |                            |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Making flour.    | e. A cotton crop.          |
| b. Lobstering.      | f. A pin factory.          |
| c. Husking corn.    | g. A copper mine.          |
| d. Harvesting kelp. | h. Getting logs to a mill. |

2. Compositions sometimes seem not to be a part of real life. A student could feel a genuine interest and do a service to his community if he would inform himself (perhaps by consulting with a physician) about some common danger to health, and explained this convincingly to the class. A class might be divided into groups, each group to prepare a three-minute talk, or a paper to be read, explaining some disease. Some of the strange facts about our bacterial foes have a romantic interest and a most practical value. Did you, for example, ever hear of the romances of studying malaria or the bubonic plague? Accounts of the campaigns against small-pox or the hook-worm or typhoid can be entertaining and useful themes.

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a. Diphtheria and its anti-toxin. | f. The "open door" of the tonsils.    |
| b. What is a cold?                | g. A recent marvel of surgery.        |
| c. The nature of pink-eye.        | h. What her high heels did.           |
| d. The cancer mystery.            | i. When he suddenly stopped training. |
| e. The war against tuberculosis.  |                                       |



3. Countless commonplaces of everyday life are curious mysteries that we never inquire about. Investigate some common mystery like those in the following list and make a report on it.

- a. What makes cheese? vinegar?
- b. How does an ice-cream freezer work?
- c. How was a fossil formed?
- d. How does sound pass over a telephone wire?
- e. What causes winter?
- f. What is a watt?
- g. How does soap operate?
- h. The principle of a safety-match.
- i. Why do skates glide on ice, though they will not glide on equally smooth glass?
- j. How was coal formed?
- k. Where, and why, does the compass point south?
- l. What is the puffing of an engine?
- m. How can you prove that the earth is round?

4. Every boy and girl in high school is soon to be a voter, must weigh public questions, and register an opinion by ballot. What do we know of the vast machinery by which our votes govern a nation? Certainly we all need to know more. Learn by inquiry at home or of friends the explanation of some element of government like those following, and arrange the information in such form that the class will grasp it readily. Your knowledge may seem slight and crude to a statesman, but may well be useful to a class of young citizens. The topic might well be treated in the form of a letter to a younger friend or sister.

- a. Nominating a candidate.
- b. The referendum.
- c. A political machine.
- d. The difference between a Representative and a Senator.
- e. How does our government pay expenses?
- f. Electing a President.
- g. The Supreme Court.
- h. Some feature of the government of your town or city.

5. A common assignment for exposition is "how to make or operate something." If possible select a subject of which you

have special knowledge and in which you have an interest; try to convey your interest to the audience.

- |                     |                           |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| a. A city pavement. | f. A sun-dial.            |
| b. A furnace fire.  | g. Faces for a cartoon.   |
| c. A wooden chain.  | h. A frame of honey.      |
| d. Good coffee.     | i. A small stone chimney. |
| e. A Welsh rabbit.  | j. An amateur movie film. |

6. Of direct practical importance in school life is the explanation to a class of some recent nation-wide or world-wide enterprise in which young people are workers. Examples are Boy Scouts, Campfire Girls, George Junior Republic. The American Junior Red Cross has arranged for a systematic exchange of letters between American students and those in England and France; if this splendid undertaking is properly presented to a school, the benefit is incalculable. Incidentally that kind of "project" topic will reveal a store of subjects for themes—subjects that are related to the real needs and purposes of the younger generation.

## CHAPTER V

### PLANNING AN ARGUMENT

#### A. STUDY OF EXAMPLES

Argument is that kind of speaking or writing which tries to persuade an audience or a reader that a statement is true or false. It is the most difficult form of composition, for it requires knowledge of two sides of a question, a desire to prove that one side is true, tact in handling the opposite side, analysis of the central point at issue, devising clear exposition, building up orderly steps of logic. That sounds very formidable, and indeed the construction of anything like an elaborate argument is a process foreign to the nature of an untrained mind. But in school we must learn to take the attitude of a trained mind if we are to fit ourselves for citizenship. In a democracy it is constantly our duty to examine arguments critically. The voter who relies on mere opinion and prejudice is a dangerous citizen. A new idea must not be voted against just because it is novel; we must listen to the argument before we decide. There is a much stronger reason for weighing arguments that are disagreeable to us: we must learn how to refute them. Wrong or dangerous ideas are not overthrown by simply asserting, "These are wrong." We cannot do our full duty as educated citizens unless we are trained to analyze fallacies and to construct a persuasive argument against them. There is a third reason for examining arguments that we believe to be untruthful: they afford much better training for composition. If we believe at the outset in the truth of a line of reasoning, we slide easily along, not challenging the logic, not observing the structure: we are not taught. But if we are antagonized by an argument, our minds are stimulated; we scrutinize the logic; we learn about the structure.

For example, most of us would be antagonized by the proposition that "Popular taste is the only safe guide in matters of art." We are accustomed to the contrary opinion from editors and critics and textbooks. Especially in the case of literature and drama have we heard that popular judgment is low and unsafe, that we must strive to elevate public taste away from crude movies and coarse melodrama. If, then, you want to argue that "Popular taste always approves what is best in dramatic art," how could you speak or write persuasively? Read the following passage, noticing how the writer begins, what fact he presents, how he reasons from this fact. You will probably agree that it is a skillful piece of writing; perhaps it is so well done that you can detect no flaw. But try to detect; read in a challenging spirit.

It was Arnold Bennett who said that the classics are kept alive, not by the man in the street, but by the passionate few. Many thoughtful persons contend that no one cares for the classics any more—that jazz and tumult and bunny-hugging and I don't know how many other things, including cheap movies, are, and always will be, in the ascendant; that the hearts of the multitude have long since turned from the beautiful in art to the lowest forms of expression; that there their real love lies, and nothing can change this awful state of affairs.

Frequently I, too, despair of poor old popular taste. But just as my courage and faith are at their lowest ebb, I see something that makes me sit up and take heart again. For instance, the other evening I went to a vast theater on the east side of town where a fine actor was presenting *Hamlet*. I thought there was no need of purchasing tickets in advance—no one would be there; so why waste my energy in engaging seats beforehand? To my amazement—and joy—I found a line of people stretching for a whole block, eager to get in. I had to take my place in that heterogeneous line—and you never saw so many kinds of people in your life! A Negro was right ahead of me; an Italian and his wife and child were not far away; and I noted the wistful faces of students and teachers who evidently feared there would be no room for them, since they had been so late in arriving. The shoving and pushing were good-natured and friendly; there wasn't the slightest semblance of rowdiness. And when at last we all got inside, there was that expectant hum of an audience that is anxious to be pleased, that has come to the theater in the right spirit and hopes to make the best

of its little time in the playhouse. Such spontaneous applause I have seldom heard. The actor was not one whose name means much to the so-called highbrow. The play was the thing these folks had come to see—*Hamlet*, not a Henry Irving or a Booth or a Forbes-Robertson, or even a Hampden or a Sothorn.

As the play proceeded I could hear discussions between the acts which revealed that these people had read Shakespeare, and not merely heard of him. And someone whispered behind me, "Do you think we can afford *Julius Cæsar* next week?"

Here was a large audience keeping alive what is perhaps the most glorious play in the English language, leaning forward to catch each line, each thought, as it came to them over the barrier of the footlights. Don't get too discouraged about popular taste.

—Adapted from "Poor Old Human Nature" in the *Outlook*.

The first paragraph illustrates the most common and the most useful device in successful argument—namely, starting with the opposite point of view, getting into line with the prejudice that we want to overthrow. We cannot persuade a person by flourishing a club in his face, by making fun of him, or by scolding him for having wrong ideas. We are more likely to persuade by starting on his side of the question, by showing that we understand his convictions, by getting on to common ground with him, by leading him *from the point where he now is* to the truth as we see it.

The second and third paragraphs are an example of what counts most in an effort to persuade—that is, facts. Perhaps the writer has to depend too much on the facts about this one audience; perhaps his speaking of "students and teachers" is an admission that the crowd was not a fair sample of popular taste. But he assures us that most of the people were enthusiastically supporting *Hamlet*, and—what is important—that this instance was not exceptional, for the people were looking forward to *Julius Cæsar*. He uses these facts in a description that appeals to our emotions, and carries us from despair about popular taste to "Don't be discouraged about popular taste."

Two cautions may be needed. (1) Don't suppose that the first paragraph is an "introduction." It is carefully contrived for

a definite purpose; it states the idea against which the writer will argue, and is so worded, with good-humored exaggeration, as to make that idea sound doubtful. (2) The second paragraph is not a "story." It is an array of persuasive facts.

Of course there are cases in which a writer is so convinced of the folly of a proposition that he opens up a direct attack upon it, ridiculing it as silly or denouncing it as immoral. But even the most warlike debater usually has the tact to begin in a conceding, persuasive way. When Professor W. G. Sumner, for example, wrote about protectionism, he took pains to start from a situation in which the opponent agrees with him, and then led the way from this illustration to the other point of view.

If you assume that the argument is sound, you may not derive much benefit from studying it. Challenge as you read; try to find the weakness and unfairness; consider what the answer might be; consult your father or some school authority about the question. Then you will learn a most valuable lesson in oral and written composition.

### Protectionism

The man who has discovered iron does not collect tools and laborers and go to work. He goes to Washington. He visits his congressman, and a dialogue takes place.

Iron man: Mr. Statesman, I have found an iron deposit on my farm.

Statesman: Have you, indeed? That is good news. Our country is richer by one new natural resource than we have supposed.

Iron man: Yes, and I now want to begin mining iron.

Statesman: Very well, go on. We shall be glad to hear that you are prospering and getting rich.

Iron man: Yes, of course. But I am now earning my living by tilling the surface of the ground, and I am afraid that I cannot make as much at mining as at farming.

Statesman: That is indeed another matter. Look into that carefully and do not leave a better industry for a worse.

Iron man: But I want to mine that iron. It does not seem right to leave it in the ground when we are importing iron all the time, but I cannot see as good profits in it at the present price for imported iron as I am making out of what I raise on the surface. I thought that

perhaps you would put a tax on all the imported iron, so that I could get more for mine. Then I could see my way clear to give up farming and go to mining.

Statesman: You do not think what you ask. That would be authorizing you to tax your neighbors, and would be throwing on them the risk of working your mine, which you are afraid to take yourself.

Iron man (aside): I have not talked the right dialect to this man. (Aloud) Mr. Statesman, the natural resources of this continent ought to be developed. American industry must be protected. The American laborer must not be forced to compete with the pauper labor of Europe.

Statesman: Now I understand you. Now you talk business. Why did you not say so before? How much tax do you want?

The next time that a buyer of pig-iron goes to market to get some, he finds that it costs thirty bushels of wheat per ton instead of twenty.

"What has happened to pig-iron?" says he.

"Oh, haven't you heard?" is the reply. "A new mine has been found. We have got a new 'natural resource.'"

"I haven't got a new 'natural resource,'" says he. "It is as bad for me as if the grasshoppers had eaten up one third of my crop."

William Graham Sumner, *The Forgotten Man*

The dialogue form of this argument and the dramatic element in it may mislead the careless student. Seeing the "story effect," he may assume that he has been reading a kind of narrative. Yet there is no true plot; there is nothing but two fragments of a plot; the passage begins with one pair of characters and closes with another pair. As a story the passage is absurd; as a compact, coherent, unified argument leading to a climax it may well be imitated by anyone who writes the answer.

President Roosevelt once had to write an argument against the idea that the evils of wealth can be removed by merely passing laws. He put his thoughts into the form of a letter—not a bad idea in school, because it keeps steadily in our mind that person, with his particular prejudices, that we are reasoning with. Roosevelt began by saying that there was nothing personal in his argument addressed to a congressman—a good idea for us in school; an argument should not be based on personal feelings. The argument is not completely represented by the few extracts

that we have space for, but the method of it appears clearly: Roosevelt does not start by denying that laws may help; he concedes, admits, puts himself alongside the congressman.

### Help Yourself

There are plenty of ugly things about wealth and its possessors in the present age, and I suppose there have been in all ages. There are so many rich people who so utterly lack patriotism, or show such sordid and selfish traits of character, that all right-minded men must look upon them with angry contempt. . . . There may be better schemes of taxation than those at present employed; it may be wise to devise inheritance taxes; and where there is a real abuse by wealth it needs to be, and in this country generally has been, promptly done away with. . . . I would no more deny that sometimes human affairs can be much bettered by legislation than I would affirm that they can always be so bettered.

All I insist upon is that we must be sure of our ground before trying to get any legislation at all, and that we must not expect too much from this legislation. . . .

Something can be done by good laws; more can be done by honest administration of the laws; but most of all can be done by frowning resolutely upon the preachers of vague discontent, and by upholding the true doctrine of self-reliance, self-help, and self-mastery. . . .

The worst lesson that can be taught a man is to rely upon others and to whine over his sufferings. If an American is to amount to anything, he must rely upon himself, and not upon the State; he must take pride in his own work, instead of sitting idle to envy the luck of others; he must face life with resolute courage, win victory if he can, and accept defeat if he must, without seeking to place on his fellow men a responsibility which is not theirs. . . .

Most of my associates have at one time or another in their lives faced poverty and know what it is; none of them are more than well-to-do. . . . They are all Americans, heart and soul, who fight for themselves the battles of their own lives. They neither forget that man does owe a duty to his fellows, nor yet do they forget that in the long run the only way to help people is to make them help themselves. They are prepared to try any properly guarded legislative remedy for ills which they believe can be remedied; but they perceive clearly that it is both foolish and wicked to teach the average man who is not well off that some wrong or injustice has been done



him, and that he should hope for redress elsewhere than in his own industry, honesty, and intelligence.\*

The steps in Roosevelt's argument are worthy of careful study. (1) He does not begin by saying that the congressman is "foolish and wicked"; he grants that there are "plenty of ugly things about wealth." (2) He grants that much good may be accomplished by proper laws to tax the very wealthy. (3) His first step forward is a very short one: "we must not expect too much from legislation." No reasonable opponent can deny the truth of that. (4) Still conceding, he introduces his own idea ("self-reliance") by turning to a remedy that "can do more than good laws." (5) Then he can easily advance a great distance by stating the converse: "The worst lesson that can be taught a man is to rely upon others." (6) He can then make the appeal that no true American can be indifferent to: "He must face life with resolute courage." (7) This appeal is extended in the last paragraph by a ringing passage about self-respect and our American dislike of a man who whiningly blames others for his own weakness. He pictures "my associates" in such an attractive way that a reader wants to be in their company—not in the company of those who believe differently. (8) Roosevelt does not conclude with the words "those who believe differently." That is a piece of "back-tracking" amateur heedlessness which his instinct would have abhorred. Nor does he close (as a lesser artist might) with the words "foolish and wicked"; for that would leave a bad taste in our mouths. He closes with words that describe good citizenship, implying that legislation is not relied on by those who possess "industry, honesty, and intelligence."

An American professor once had to argue for the truth of this proposition: "It is worth while for teachers of English to study French methods of teaching the mother tongue." Nowadays we grant the truth of this rather readily, but in 1913, before the World War, American educators looked to Germany

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\* From *American Ideals and Other Essays*, by Theodore Roosevelt. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London.

for methods; they knew very little about education in France. A portion of Professor Brown's argument was this:

### Study French Methods

Since the Franco-Prussian War [1870] there has been an inclination in our own country to look upon France as a nation whose achievements belong wholly in the past. This attitude I encountered several years ago when I first informed some friends that I hoped to spend a year in the French schools studying certain educational problems. They expressed surprise that one should look upon France as having anything to contribute to present-day life. And their attitude represents a widespread misapprehension among a part of the American people. They regard the France of today [1913] as a nation made up chiefly of milliners, ladies' tailors, long-haired artists, and "decadent," absinthe-drinking poets who live a life of sensuous ease, glorying in the nation's past and forgetting its present and its future. Quite naturally they ask what we intense, matter-of-fact Americans can learn from such a people.

This view unfortunately disregards many of the Frenchman's most characteristic qualities, his most firmly fixed ideals, and, above all, his tremendous progress in the last forty years. . . . While we have been shouting from the housetops about our bigness, our liberty, the magnificence of our university "plants," the glory of our schools, and the size of our educational meetings, France has been very diligently, very modestly working out many of the problems that in America remain largely unsolved and in some instances almost untouched.

The present is therefore an opportune time for such a study. The changes that have been taking place in France have resulted in a more effective scheme of education. There has been no "breaking down" of French culture, but only a well-considered, logical effort to adapt culture to the conditions that have arisen in France, as elsewhere, because of new economic and social demands. . . .

In the chapters that follow, the chief aim is to show how the educational system that has reached its highest perfection under the quickened French life of the past half-century serves as a powerful means of fortifying the language tradition that was fostered in a smaller way in the earlier schools. It is the purpose of the book to point out how the accumulated experience of French educators is applied to-day. . . .

Instead of giving merely the framework of programs and courses, with occasional comment, I have sought to reveal the everyday practice of teachers—the practice that, after all, shapes the pupil's habit

of mind—and to suggest the point of view, the moving spirit, of the nation's educational life.

Rollo Walter Brown, *How the French Boy Learns to Write*

Take good note of the sequence in Professor Brown's argument: (1) A humorous description of what we have thought of France; (2) the modest efficiency of France contrasted with our American conceit; (3) France really has adapted education to modern conditions; (4) its educational system is wise because it is based on accumulated experience; (5) he will reveal the moving spirit of the French system. The last sentence is impressive and elevated in tone.

We could write an essay to prove that the quotation from Mr. Brown's preface is an exposition; we could perfectly well argue that the preface "explains why" the study of French education is worth while for Americans nowadays. The same kind of essay could be written about most arguments—so far, that is, as their form and matter are concerned. Argument must always be composed largely of exposition. The difference is one of *purpose*. Is an author concerned to "explain why," and to stop there? Then he has written exposition. Does he wish, having some feeling about the matter, to explain a situation *in order to change a reader's opinion*? If he shows that purpose, he has written argument.

Suppose this general topic is set for an oral composition: "The best section of the United States." That calls for an explanation of why one section is best. But if some student has a love for his own part of the country, if he realizes that most people think his section is disagreeable, and if he attempts to *change people's opinion* about his section, then he uses argument. The following theme by an American girl is such a plea. It may be said that she does not really prove anything, that her theme is technically not a true argument. But in form it is an effort to persuade, and as a structure it is an excellent model. Notice **how naturally** she begins on "the other fellow's side" of the ques-  
tion how good an instinct she chooses to follow a straight

line in time order, and how her conclusion, though it may be logically wrong for a debate, sounds like "the end of the whole matter."

### My Section Is Best

You would not call it "the best section of the United States"; no, you would shrug your shoulders and wrinkle your nose in disdain and say, "What a dirty, ugly place! Fancy anyone living there!"

And if I heard you say it, I should laugh and retort, "Oh, but you are a stranger. You can't see the beauties until you have lived here, and loved here, and called this 'dirty, ugly place' home."

I will not, however, be unreasonable. The coal-fields of West Virginia are dirty; they are ugly—to an outsider; they are everything that "the best section of the United States" should not be. And still I claim them, with pride and affection, as "the best section."

For if you had stood, with me, on the top of the mountains, in June, with the wind blowing through your hair, and had looked below, where, as far as the eye could reach, the steep slopes of the mountain-sides were carpeted with the pink and white blooms of the mountain laurel, you would not have called it "ugly"—you would have whispered with me, "This is beauty."

And, on a hot summer's day, if you had toiled, with me, up a narrow, winding mountain-path, where the vines sprawled over the road and invited you to the cool, green forest depths they sheltered, you would not have called it "dirty"—you would have breathed deeply and said, "How clean, how fresh!"

I could tell you, too, of the woods in autumn, when the red and gold of the foliage fairly startles you with its vividness, when the smoke of the burning forest covers the mountains with a gray haze, and fills the air with the sharp, pungent odor of burning wood.

And in winter! Then it is all white with the deep snows that come early and stay late. If I could only describe to you the deep, brooding peace that the snow seems to bring, when you plow knee-deep through the drifts, and feel the flakes falling on your upturned face, and see the tall trees standing still and straight, their bare twigs laced with icicles!

They are beautiful at all times, my mountains, whether the laurel covers their slopes, or the snow.

You may say, "But it's not mere physical beauty that makes a section the best in the United States." Nevertheless I love it, and it's home, and, after all, home is always the best place.

The five examples that we have now seen are largely about questions of opinion. An argument is often about a question of fact—for example: "Is the man guilty or not guilty?" "Did Bacon write *Love's Labor's Lost*?" We may not be able to find enough evidence to prove which side is true, but we all know that the right answer must be either *yes* or *no*. In debating any such question our opinions and feelings are of small value; we must seek facts.

Suppose that the question is: "Did Peary reach the North Pole in 1909?" To most of us the question is absurd—almost offensive. Peary had a long record as an honored, truthful, daring explorer; we know that eminent scientists passed on his evidence and accredited it; his detractors have been answered at length. But our trust in Peary will help to teach us a most useful lesson in arguing if it makes us study every step in the following passage and observe the author's method. He challenges our faith with facts.

### Peary's Achievement

In these eight marches did Peary go to the North Pole, and was it possible for him to do so, when such a feat is compared with anything heretofore recorded in polar work? . . .

Cyrus C. Adams, Editor of the *American Geographic Society*, writes: "Four miles per day is considered a fair average over polar ice." . . .

General A. W. Greeley in his *Hand Book of Arctic Explorations* says: "McClintock, already famous as the greatest of arctic sledge-men, surpasses himself in a journey remarkable for its duration, distance, and success—a daily average of 13.3 miles. . . . Lockwood's average daily travel to this point was 9 miles, the greatest ever made by man-power in a very high latitude on any extended journey."

Nansen and Johansen, during their entire journey of 450 days, never exceeded 20 miles of daily travel except on one day, when they "think" they went 25 miles.

The greatest daily distances achieved by Shackleton were made on his return from near the South Pole, and occurred on five successive days. The record shows daily distances of 20, 18, 22, 26, 29 statute miles. On this last day he was descending a mountain slope; a following blizzard was driving him on; sails were spread; he was on land.

Yet 29 miles was his greatest effort, and for one day only. . . .

Edward Payson Weston, a trained athlete, the greatest known pedestrian, traveling over smooth roads, failed to make the distance from Boston to San Francisco (about 4000 miles) in 100 days, an average of 40 miles per day; yet he availed himself of weather conditions, rested in stormy weather, and traveled on selected roads.

Peary's claims, as I read them, are that he, in a somewhat crippled condition, with Henson and four untrained Eskimos, bundled in arctic clothing, driving the same dogs all the way, trudging with loaded sleds over "mountains" of snow and ice, walked an actual distance of over 900 route miles in 21 days, averaging over 45.5 route miles per day; and on three of those days made an average of 95.68 route miles per day, and one day made 101.92 route miles. Could he physically do this? . . .

I have now shown that no criteria can be set up from arctic sledging, either over land or sea, to justify a belief that Peary's story of his trip after leaving the Bartlett camp is true. Peary's only civilized companion has been called as witness, and the testimony is unanimous that these claims for speed are preposterous and impossible. It would be vain to attempt to break the force of this array of indisputable evidence which establishes beyond controversy that Peary's alleged speed from the Bartlett camp to the North Pole and return is without foundation.

Capt. Thomas F. Hall, *Has the North Pole Been Discovered?*

In these six examples we have seen (1) red-hot advertising, (2) humorous dialogue, (3) exhortation to self-reliance, (4) praise of French education, (5) love of the place where I live, (6) attack upon an established reputation. One element is common to all: the writer's earnestness to prove something. Here is the great difference between argument and the other types of composition. A student with a knack for writing may dash off a tolerable story without having his heart in it, or may give a good oral description without being excited, or produce a clear explanation to order; but he is unlikely to produce a persuasive argument unless his feelings have been stirred. A story can be elaborated out of any incident in a newspaper; a descriptive subject is always present to wide-awake eyes; everybody understands a dozen processes that he can explain. But argument is different. Before we can argue, we must have observed

a conflict of *opinions*, must have examined each one, must have found out what each is based on, must pass judgment, and render an orderly statement of why we believe as we do.

That statement should be unified. Each one of the six examples drives at one idea, has "one big reason" to which all parts contribute. A high-school speaker or writer of short compositions is in danger of being less effective if he says, "and now my second point is," "and now my third point is." Strong arguments can be made by experienced speakers who advance "three main reasons," but the novice usually trains himself better if he plans his brief speeches on the basis of "my one big reason."

In no form of composition is the "straight line" so necessary or so hard to keep as in arguing. In no form is a preliminary outline more likely to be needed. One who is preparing to speak or write should always be asking himself, "What step am I now taking?" "What steps are ahead?" "How shall I move from one to the other without jolts?" Especially he should require of himself a strong conclusion; the end of his theme should seem to the reader a destination—a summit from which he sees a whole truth.

### B. OUTLINES FOR ARGUMENTS

An outline for a long and formal argument, such as is prepared for an interschool debate, is called a "brief." A brief is written in a fixed, conventional form of six or seven headings.

- I. Statement of the question.
- II. Introduction to explain the particular importance or bearing of the question.
- III. Definition of the question.
- IV. Body of the argument.

This division is the principal part of the speech; it would ordinarily amount to two-thirds of the whole. The different reasons advanced, or the steps of logic developing one reason, are here given in a numbered series.

- V. Refutation of opposing arguments.
- VI. Summary of part iv (or of iv and v).
- VII. Final appeal (the "peroration").

A complete brief is filled out, not with mere titles, but with complete sentences. Notice one way in which it differs from the advice given in this chapter about beginning with the other person's point of view. In the standard form of brief the other side's arguments are examined and overthrown near the end. Putting the "refutation" in so late may be doubtful policy, at least for inexperienced speakers; to preserve coherence and emphasis while turning from our own side and then coming back to our side requires skill. Most students will secure a better effect in shorter compositions by attending first to the opposite argument, and then proceeding in a straight line to their own climax. Nor is this merely advice for novices; successful university debaters frequently begin a speech by answering an opponent's argument, and then use all the rest of their time and energy for setting forth their own reasoning in a course that moves steadily forward without any interruption of refutation.

Certain hints and cautions in reference to the brief will be useful in all spoken or written argument. (1) By all means let the audience know what the question is that you are going to discuss. (2) Make any suitable statement that shows the importance of the question, but be brief at this point, remembering that your time is needed for argument. (3) By all means define the question, but not simply for the benefit of the audience. Many an argument has gone astray at the start because the speaker had not defined the question to himself. It is of prime importance to ask yourself before planning reasons, "What does this mean?" Be brief in what you say of definition in your speech. (4) Be brief in summarizing your argument; in fact it is almost safe to say, "Don't summarize." In a 400-word composition it may be better to marshal your ideas to a climax, and not cool the audience with a dash of perfunctory "summary." (5) Don't think of a conclusion as a detached rhetorical tag. It



ought to be part of the whole—the best part. Don't strain and overdo for a peroration; sincerity counts in debating.

The following outline of an argument on "deporting aliens" is as formal and complete as is ever necessary for ordinary school composition.

### **It Is Right to Deport Aliens for Preaching Certain Doctrines**

- I. Definition of "doctrines."
  1. They are not mere theory.
  2. They may be opposed to Americanism.
  3. They may incite to unlawful violence.
  4. This is sedition.
- II. Dangers of the harsh treatment are imaginary.
  1. "Free speech" is not endangered.
  2. Helpless persons are not persecuted.
  3. Needed reforms are not endangered.
    - a. There is full freedom for reasoning.
    - b. Reformers may persuade voters.
- III. Not to penalize sedition imperils democracy.
  1. Enemies of law profit.
  2. Destruction is encouraged.
  3. True reformers are discredited and progress is hindered.
- IV. Final appeal: "In zeal for freedom of ideas let us not endanger our land of the free."

The following are examples of briefer outlines for arguments.

### **No Man Should Be Allowed to Earn More Than \$25,000 a Year**

- I. Admit that some men must have larger incomes than others, for otherwise
  1. Able leaders would not work.
  2. Therefore industry would degenerate.
  3. And poor people would be in worse plight.
- II. But there might be some limit.
  1. What need of \$5,000,000 a year?
  2. Is \$1,000,000 needed?

3. Picture the extravagance possible with \$100,000.
  4. Show how luxuriously a family could live on \$25,000.
- III. The good to be accomplished.
1. Prevent social unrest.
  2. Uplift wage-earners.

### The Government Should Not Try to Fix the Price of Wheat

- I. Price-fixing may be necessary in abnormal times.
- II. But it is unwise in normal times.
  1. Direct evils.
    - a. If maximum is fixed too high.
    - b. If maximum is fixed too low.
  2. Indirect evils.
    - a. Substitute cereals boom in price.
    - b. We pay more for poorer bread.
  3. The general truth of history is that price-regulation never succeeded in normal times.

## EXERCISES

### I. OUTLINING

Prepare outlines of the six arguments given as examples in this chapter.

### II. ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ARGUMENTS

[Additional exercises of this sort are given in Part Six.]

Write specific criticisms of the following arguments. A student will derive no benefit from simply detecting that "this composition is all muddled up." He will not get much help even from specifying that "the Student Council is first called a good thing, then a bad thing, and finally good again." These exercises will yield real profit only if the student specifies in more detail. Suppose the following paragraph is to be criticized:

Once in a while a young man is found who, although his family are very wealthy, has a peculiar dread of idleness, and who hates to sit around and do nothing. This boy, each summer, seeks a position simply for the experience he can gain by working, which will be invaluable to him in later life. When the autumn comes and he returns to school or college, he finds that he not only is stronger and more healthy, but also that he has quite a little extra pocket money. There are plenty of excellent opportunities for this kind of boy; and especially in these dark times when the workingmen are drafted into the army, someone must take their place, because war cannot be waged without munitions, food, clothes, and numerous other things. Someone must make them.

Definite comment might run like this: The first three sentences follow in a straight line of thought: (1) the rich boy who dreads idleness, (2) who therefore works, (3) who is therefore stronger in the fall. But the "invaluable experience" of the second sentence is already lost sight of, and we are run off the track to the rich boy's pocket money. In the fourth sentence we are switched to the converse topic—"the opportunities for this kind of boy"; and then we find ourselves on an entirely different road—the need of the country for food and clothes. At the end we are in the wilderness of the labor problem—"someone must make the numerous other things."

It is not often necessary to write a criticism as long as the original theme. This example is an extreme case. Comment ought to be concise. But the student should write out as much as is necessary to specify at what points and in what particular topics a theme goes astray.

If some of the examples that follow seem incredibly disorderly, it may be interesting to know that they were all written just as they stand (except that blunders in spelling and punctuation have been corrected) by eleventh and twelfth-grade students of some ability. The first one, for example, was written seriously by a young man who, one year later, entered college with a high credit in English composition. Though he could walk a tight-rope in narrative or a chalk-line in description, he had never learned to stay on the road in argument.

Do not spend time in noticing poor choice of words, poor sentences, wrong constructions, etc. Attend entirely to general arrangement—that is, to both merits and defects of the line of reasoning. Comment briefly on the sensible reasons, or on the wrong-headed and silly reasons like those in number 1.

### **1. Part of an Argument That "Prohibition Is Wrong"**

Man has certain natural rights, which no government may justly deprive him of. The right to the use of liquor is one of them. It is true that the law cannot be too rigid in the case of minors and savages. In various European colonies the savage natives may not drink. That is really right, for the natives become worse than maniacs when under the influence of liquor. They are not educated up to it. The European has known the taste of drink for centuries upon centuries. Alexander the Great is said to have died from a drunken debauch. So the average European may take liquor without overdoing it.

### **2. Beginning of an Argument That "You Ought to Go to College"**

Your mother seemed very uncertain where she was going to send you, but thought of course you would wish to go to a society school. As you know, my mother has at last put some enthusiasm into me about going to college. At first I hated the thought of going. College girls always seemed to me to know so much that they were surely destined to be "old maids." After something has been called to your attention, it is funny how often you come across it. Mother has told me so often how charming college girls are that I am at last beginning to realize the fact.

I suppose you already have guessed that I am trying to persuade you to go to college with me. I am very dubious as to whether I will be accredited, but as you are brilliant, I know you will be.

Then just think of the good times we will have after we get there—etc.

### **3. School Dramatics Are Beneficial**

School dramatics are a good thing for the students for a great many reasons. For a student to take part in any play means necessarily the dropping of many other pleasures in order to attend rehearsals and meetings of the play's cast. This characteristic of self-denial is a characteristic that may well be developed in any person. These dramatics also develop punctuality in a student. In a play it is of the highest importance that the characters appear at the right

time; hence everyone participating must be punctual. They also develop poise in a character, as no person appears well on a stage in a bad standing position. To act in any play does not mean merely to speak lines, and, although the voice culture is very important, the most important thing a person in a play learns is to act. By acting is meant the interpreting of the part and fulfilling of this interpretation to the highest degree. A person also through dramatics gains confidence in himself, in that he is able to stand before an audience with perfect ease and lack of self-consciousness.

#### 4. The Honor System Ought to Be Adopted in X— High School

We of X— are very proud of our public school system. Though X— cannot boast of being foremost in a great many respects, in this one she is certainly the equal of any city of our great United States. Hesper is largest and best—I admit my prejudice—of all our excellent high schools. She wins the debates, and on the gridiron or diamond seldom meets her match. Her pupils form as fine a student body as one would hope to find anywhere. Still, in spite of all this, there is one fact which is truly lamentable: in spite of all the teachers' watchfulness there is a great deal of dishonesty.

I may perhaps have too much faith in the strength of conscience and too little knowledge of human frailty, but I sincerely believe that the dishonesty could be wiped out almost entirely by a great appeal to the honor of all. In other words, I believe the Honor System should be installed.

As things are now done, nothing is said about the dishonesty of copying another's night-work or of communicating during examinations, but great stress has been laid upon the awful consequences if found out. Thus things have got to the point where, when one contemplates a dishonest act, he thinks not at all of the moral side of the act, but merely of his chances of getting caught. Willing to run this risk, he cheats, and usually with impunity, for the teacher cannot watch all during the examinations or detect each "borrowed" paper.

Under the Honor System all would be different. Mass meetings could be held at which lectures would be given by outside men as well as by teachers, and at which the more influential students would give short, informal talks. Then could follow an open discussion from the floor, when all would have a chance to express their views. It is a well-known fact that in trying to convince someone else of something one gets to believe it all the firmer himself. So, if the students spoke on the necessity of being honest, they would believe in this necessity with all their hearts, and would be the last to be dishonest.

During examinations, though a teacher might remain in the room to prevent too great a temptation, it should be clearly understood that he is not there as a policeman, that he is not trying to watch each person to prevent dishonesty, but that each and every pupil is on his honor as a lady or a gentleman to be "straight." The teacher might read or mark papers to show his faith in the students. As a final safeguard each pupil could be required to write at the end of his paper that its contents were strictly his own and that he had communicated with nobody. If he knew that he would have to write this, nearly all temptation to cheat would be removed.

Were this Honor System installed instead of the present one, dishonesty would be reduced to a minimum, the work of the school would be more successful, and the character of its students would be greatly benefited.

### 5. The Moving-Picture Theater Is a Benefit to Our Town

In my opinion the moving picture is more enjoyable than the legitimate stage. It is more real; you have to imagine nothing. In the moving picture you can see beautiful scenery, beautiful houses, and everything that is worth seeing, even if you cannot see them in real life.

In Bartonville we have a moving-picture theater called the *Weymouth*. Here the highest-class pictures are shown. The place is well ventilated. The *Weymouth* has the highest-priced and the best organ in the state. There are always several maids in attendance. Therefore any mother may allow her children to go there unattended and be sure that they are safe and happy.

Almost every Saturday morning a picture is shown for the benefit of the children. Such plays as *Alice in Wonderland* are shown. The money received from these performances is given to some charitable organization by the owner of the theater. I can assure you that the children get more pleasure from these performances than they could get in any other way. Besides, it is one way to amuse a child, and anyone who has ever been in the company of small children knows how hard it is to amuse them and keep them amused.

At this theater the current events are shown. Many people do not like to read newspapers, and by going to the movies one may keep oneself acquainted with the events which are happening every day without reading a single newspaper.

### 6. Barrie's Books Ought to Be Read in School

Of course it is natural for a school boy or girl to wish that his or her favorite author might be read more in school. I am not sure,

however, that Barrie is my favorite author; I have never been able to decide that point. But certainly he is an author of our time who I believe ought to be more appreciated by school children. There are few authors of our time that I would want to feast on. I should tire immediately of Bernard Shaw, and I have sometimes felt that I could get too much of Kipling, but I have never read enough of Barrie to satisfy me.

My taste was started in school by accident. One afternoon when our class had nothing to do, our teacher began reading *Sentimental Tommy* to us. I afterwards haunted the library to get the book and finish it. Since then I have read almost everything that Barrie has written.

"But," you say, "so much of his writing is in the Scotch dialect!" Very well. Do you not find the Scotch dialect more charming than the language of our slums? And have not many others delighted in it? Barrie is a typical Scotchman, hard to approach, sincere and friendly on intimacy, and as careless of dress as was his idol, Stevenson. I think his admiration of Stevenson is a most unique affair, for although there often exists between authors a deep friendship, it seldom begins with hero-worship. Barrie, when a boy, met Stevenson when the latter was angling. He was allowed to watch him and fix his flies, and from that time on his love for Stevenson was most intense. In his *Margaret Ogilvie* he devotes a whole chapter to those well-loved initials, "R. L. S."

Barrie has also written books where the characters are not Scotch, like *Quality Street*, which, although in play form, has such delightful stage directions and descriptions that it is a pity not to read it. And the immortal *Peter Pan*! Does not every child who has seen Maude Adams play that wish to read the story at home or in school? Personally I think Barrie and Maude Adams are about the finest pair that there is. She is his own choice, for he picked her out to play Babbie in *The Little Minister*. She was his ideal Babbie, and since then I think the two have helped each other along to the fame that is theirs in this country. I have seen only *Peter Pan* and *A Kiss for Cinderella*, but in the ten years that elapsed between the times I saw them I think Maude Adams became more "Barrie-esque" than ever. I wish I might see his three little plays now. I think that is a wonderful idea, the man giving the plays and the actors giving their work and time for charity. But, best of all, I am glad that Barrie did it. My Scotch blood makes me as proud of him as of an American, and I wish other girls and boys felt the same way, or at least had the chance to, by knowing him.

## III. TOPICS FOR ARGUMENT, ORAL OR WRITTEN

1. From the six illustrative arguments in Section A of this chapter select the one that most antagonizes you, and prepare a careful answer.

2. Large questions of government policy are generally not to be attempted in school; but if such a question is being generally talked about, if the newspapers are full of it, it may furnish good material. Prepare a four-minute argument opposing or upholding one of the following propositions, or some similar one:

- a. My political party was right in what it did.
- b. We have been wrong in our treatment of Mexico.
- c. The railway brotherhoods are in the right.
- d. A daylight-saving law is a mistake.
- e. The state should compel every high-school boy to take military training.

3. There is nearly always some question that is being agitated in the school, about which students have strong opinions. Such a subject is good material for an argumentative composition. It may be about a proposed form of government, an examination system, a matter of athletic management. It may be a question of the classroom or the curriculum, like: "Should students criticize each other's themes?" "Should the number of elective studies be decreased?" Such an argument might be written as a letter to the teacher or principal.

4. Probably some question is much discussed in your community; you have heard it thrashed out at home. The high school is a forum for these matters. Prepare to defend one side of some such debate—for example:

- a. We should be taxed more, to make roads.
- b. The city council was right.
- c. The churches should unite.
- d. The writer of the anonymous letter in yesterday's paper has harmed the community.

5. Write a letter to your newspaper arguing such a question of general interest to the community.



6. Select some question that has been of interest to you personally, and argue to show that your opinion is right. There are many more choices than you realize. The following list should put you in mind of some similar conviction of your own:

- a. Never give money to a man who begs.
- b. Colored newspaper supplements do serious harm.
- c. The buffalo nickel is superior to the old nickel. (An observant artist might be eloquent for ten minutes on this seemingly trivial subject.)
- d. Spirits do appear to us.

7. The stimulus of competition is needed to bring out the best of our talent for arguing. If set debates between two classes cannot be arranged, it may be possible to have "exchange compositions" of an argumentative kind, each class sending visiting speakers to the other. Such a public appearance as a representative of our community is a "project" that is true to the demands of real life. (See paragraph 5, p. 60.)

## CHAPTER VI

### PLANNING A LETTER

#### A. THE PERSONAL ELEMENT

The customary ways of beginning and concluding letters are explained on pages 503-506. In this chapter we are concerned with the personal and the business letters that attempt to convey the feelings of the writer to his correspondent. Letters may be written to tell a story, though this kind is uncommon; letters are often descriptive in character, telling a friend or relative what our recent experiences have been like; a letter is often written to explain why or how something happened; the purpose of a letter may be to persuade a friend to change his opinion. Whatever its purpose, a letter is more personal and familiar than other types of composition. The most successful letter-writers are those who put aside formality, who talk intimately with their pens, who realize that they are not simply setting black words on white paper, but are present with the person who is to read.

To some students that may sound a bit fanciful, or at least like rhetorical advice that hardly applies in real life. Yet no one believes it more thoroughly or tries harder to practice it than hard-headed business men. No school textbook would dare to put the truth so strongly or picturesquely as the following article from a business men's magazine.

From now on don't write any more letters. Instead, *talk* them. In thought and in speech, as well as in fact, refer to your correspondence as *letter-talking*.

I am reminded of a concern whose national advertising was very productive. Inquiries came in large numbers. But the advertising department had no jurisdiction over them. . . . All inquiries

went to the sales department. The following is a sample of how it handled inquiries:

"We thank you very much for your inquiry, and take pleasure in enclosing herewith a catalogue and price list of the articles which we manufacture.

"We cannot locate in our records that we have had the pleasure of doing business with you before and would thank you very much to advise us in what way you are interested in handling our product.

"We would thank you very much to advise us if you are interested in our product as a consumer or as a dealer.

"Thanking you for the interest you have shown in our line, we remain," (etc.). . . .

Could you think of anyone imagining himself looking his prospect in the eye and thanking him in every paragraph, and "very much" in all but one? Or do you think he would commence all but one paragraph with "we"? . . . .

Every business transaction is human before it is anything else, and there's mighty little of the human about "we" when it means a distant corporation: an "it" artificially created, so to speak, by law.

Despite the well-deserved extinction of the old-time glad-hand salesman as a business-getter, personal contact and personality remain most formidable factors in business. They can move mountains. The "man on the ground" has a tenfold advantage. And when somebody is "peevd" or hard to handle, "the Old Man" still says, "Guess I'll have to go and have a talk with him."

That's why we should approach personal contact as nearly as possible in our letters. The nearer we get to the tête-à-tête idea the more effective the letters we talk will be.

Corneil Ridderhof in *Modern Methods*

The managers of commercial correspondence are everywhere learning the wisdom of this advice. A business letter that trusts to setting down mere facts, or that uses stale, conventional terms, is a failure. For example, if a bookdealer received a complaint that certain books had not reached a customer, he might reply: "No order of yours has ever come to us. We are sending the books today." That letter is very different from what a clerk would *say* over a counter; it gives a customer the feeling that he is dealing with some machine which is utterly indifferent to his need for books. A better way would be to have some *person* (perhaps a secretary), for the firm, *talk* to him: "I am sorry

that the mail failed to bring your letter to us, so that you have had this disagreeable delay. Your order is being hurried to you this morning. Please let me know in the enclosed stamped envelope when you receive the books, for the Company is anxious that you should get them promptly."

In this brief note we have an illustration of what must always be the basis of good correspondence: putting ourselves in the other person's place, forgetting our own worries and thinking of *his*, keeping *his* needs and hopes in the foreground. To that customer the books were highly important; the delay was to him a real grievance; he felt defrauded and wrote a stinging complaint. Yet the firm was not in the least to blame. Moreover, to the secretary this customer was simply number 3217, who had written foolishly. It would have been just to explain how blameless the firm was and how groundless the complaint was. But such justice is not the foundation of letter-writing. We must base our answer on the other person's state of mind. In this case he feels very little interest in "who was to blame"; his mind is all occupied with his own irritation at a delay. Hence the secretary makes only an incidental mention of how "the mail failed," and puts all the emphasis thus: "Too bad, my dear Sir. We're doing everything we can to help you out of your difficulty." That is the kind of letter that brings results—whether in dollars or friendship.

The advice about "being personal" may easily be misunderstood and wrongly applied. It is useful if it promotes courtesy and good feeling; it is worse than useless if it results in a breezy, "fresh," undignified style. The writer of the following appeal to a young man who had not renewed his subscription to *Playtime Magazine* is not courteously and effectively personal, but disagreeable and noisy.

Shall PLAYTIME keep coming, or do you want it stopped? That is the question NOW. Pin your check for \$3.00 to this letter and return at once, which will be equivalent to saying—

YES, LET IT COME AHEAD.

The advice to "be personal" applies only to those who have sensible personalities, and who have imagination enough to appreciate how their words will sound to refined people.

Washington knew how to put himself in the place of the person to whom he was writing, as he shows in a letter that he wrote to his wife after he had been appointed to the command of the Continental Army in June, 1775. If ever a man was excusable for thinking about his own great fears and burdens, Washington was excusable on that day. But he was careful to put himself in the place of a wife. The expressions by which he did this are printed in italics here, though of course Washington made no such false emphasis with his pen when writing to his own wife.\*

Philadelphia, 18 June, 1775

My Dearest:

I am now set down to write to you on a subject which fills me with inexpressible concern, and this concern is aggravated and increased *when I reflect upon the uneasiness I know it will give you.* It has been determined in Congress that the whole army raised for the defense of the American cause shall be put under my care, and that it is necessary for me to proceed immediately to Boston to take upon me the command of it.

You may believe me, my dear Patsy, when I assure you, in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it, not only from *my unwillingness to part with you and the family*, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity, and that *I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home*, than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years. . . .

It was utterly out of my power to refuse this appointment, without exposing my character to such censures as would have reflected dishonor upon myself and given pain to my friends. This, I am sure, *could not, and ought not, to be pleasing to you*, and must have lessened me considerably in my own esteem. I shall rely, therefore, confidently on that Providence which has heretofore preserved and been bountiful to me, not doubting but that *I shall return safe to you* in

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\* Quoted from *Familiar Letters*, compiled by Edwin Greenlaw for the Lake Classics, Scott, Foresman and Company. The five letters quoted hereafter in this Chapter are taken, without further acknowledgment, from Professor Greenlaw's interesting and useful collection.

the fall. I shall feel no pain from the toil or the danger of the campaign; my unhappiness will flow from *the uneasiness I know you will feel from being left alone.*

In a history of those momentous days Washington would have made no mention of "Patsy"; when he writes her a letter, and his great and troubled situation is discussed with reference to "how will my wife feel?"

Jane Austen, writing to her niece, reports the pleasant things that have been said about the girl.

Hans Place, Nov. 28, 1814

My dear Anna:

We all came away very much pleased with our visit. We talked of you for about a mile and a half with great satisfaction; and I have been just sending a very good report of you to Miss Benn, with a full account of your dress for Susan and Maria. . . .

I am going this morning to see the little girls in Keppel Street. Cassy was excessively interested about your marriage when she heard about it, which was not until she was to drink your health on the wedding-day. She asked questions in her usual manner—what he said to you, and what you said to him. If your uncle were at home, he would send his best love, but I will not impose any base fictitious remembrances on you; mine I can honestly give, and remain

Your affectionate aunt,

J. Austen

If we are writing to a person who is about to be married or has lost all his money or is engrossed in business, it will usually be poor taste to say much about ourselves; and it is generally true that people prefer letters which are not filled with "what I am doing." Yet if we are writing to parents or brothers, we may know that they will relish the homely details of our own daily life. Macaulay once began a family letter this way:

Library of the H. of C., July 30th, 1832  
11 o'clock at night

My dear Sisters:

Daniel Whittel Harvey is speaking; the House is thin; the subject is dull; and I have stolen away to write to you. Lushington is scribbling at my side. No sound is heard but the scratching of

our pens and the ticking of the clock. We are in a far better atmosphere than in the smoking-room, whence I wrote to you last week; and the company is more decent.

Then he filled several pages with an account of how busy he was, how he spent Sunday, what famous people he had met—tiresome to a stranger, but entertaining to the sisters in their quiet home. At the end he playfully reminded them of how much he prized their letters to him.

Next Sunday I am to go to Lord Lansdowne's at Richmond, so that I hope to have something to tell you. But on second thoughts I will tell you nothing, nor will ever write to you again, nor ever speak to you again. I have no pleasure in writing to undutiful sisters. Why do you not send me longer letters? But I am at the end of my paper, so that I have no more room to scold. Ever yours,

T. B. M.

When Washington Irving was nearly sixty years old, he wrote to tell a young English novelist how much he had enjoyed *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. Dickens's answer is as animated and personal as if he had fallen in with Irving while walking along a lonely road.

I have been so accustomed to associate you with my pleasantest and happiest thoughts, and with my leisure hours, that I rush at once into full confidence with you, and fall, as it were, naturally, and by the very laws of gravity, into your open arms. Questions come thronging to my pen as to the lips of people who meet after long hoping to do so. I don't know what to say first, or what to leave unsaid, and am constantly disposed to break off and tell you again how glad I am this moment has arrived.

My dear Washington Irving, I cannot thank you enough for your cordial and generous praise, or tell you what deep and lasting gratification it has given me. I hope to have many letters from you, and to exchange a frequent correspondence. I send this to say so. After the first two or three I shall settle down into a connected style, and become gradually rational.

You know what the feeling is, after having written a letter, sealed it, and sent it off. I shall picture you reading this and answering it before it has lain one night in the post office. Ten to one that before the fastest packet could reach New York I shall be writing again.

Do you suppose the post office clerks care to receive letters? I have my doubts. They get into a dreadful state of indifference. A postman, I imagine, is quite callous. Conceive his delivering one to himself, without being startled by a preliminary double knock!

Always your faithful friend,  
Charles Dickens

Dickens knew that the author of *Rip Van Winkle* would welcome a happy-go-lucky flow of enthusiastic thanks. But this does not mean that he scribbled along without planning. It may be well to remind ourselves here that the chapter is about "planning a letter," and that the great essential of every good plan is, "put yourself in the reader's place."

The following three sentences from a letter by Charles Kingsley show a most careful approach to a delicate undertaking. A self-willed young man wished to elect a course of studies that his mother did not approve; she asked Kingsley to try to persuade her boy; he knew that the boy might resent any advice that was offered.

My dear Kennion:

It is with reluctance that I write on the subject of your studies; as, in the first place, I have no right to give an opinion; and, in the next, I quite feel the truth of what you say in your letter to your mother—that none can decide for you a question with all the bearings of which none but yourself can be acquainted. She is extremely anxious, however, that you should decide rightly, and has written to me to ask what I think. So I am sure you will not think that I am intruding advice.

Good letter-writing may demand a story with a real contrivance of plot, or a description with all the life we can put into it, or a clear explanation in one straight line of progress, or an argument as persuasive as we know how to make it. But the raciest description or the most forceful argument may still be a poor letter if the reader has no interest in that kind of writing at that time from that writer. The plan of an effective letter will always be determined by one consideration: "What does that particular person want to hear from me in this situation?"



## B. TYPES OF LETTERS

The rest of this chapter is devoted to examples of the types of letters that we most commonly have to write. For the sake of brevity the addresses and signatures are omitted (except in one example). The proper forms of headings and conclusions are shown on pages 503-506.

1. **Conventional third-person notes.** If a person receives a formal engraved invitation in the third person (e. g., "Mrs. Endicott Lowell requests," etc.) it should be answered in the third person. The writer's address and the date may be placed below the note, at the left; otherwise the sheet of paper contains only the single, formal, third-person sentence that accepts or declines; there is no heading, no salutation, no signature. If you have been invited to an "at home" to meet Miss Somebody, and can accept, you write, placing your sentence in the middle of the sheet, thus:

Miss Hungerford accepts with pleasure Mrs.  
Swett's kind invitation for Saturday, the eigh-  
teenth.

5230 Cornell Avenue  
September eleventh

If you have received an invitation to a wedding reception, a card on which are the letters "R.S.V.P.," or a request for an answer, and if you cannot accept, you use this model:

Mr. Cooper regrets that a previous engage-  
ment prevents his accepting Mr. and Mrs.  
Sattler's kind invitation to their home for Tues-  
day, August third.

56 West Lincoln Street  
July twenty-eighth

In the case of a social affair for which a list of "R.S.V.P." invitations has been issued the formal answer is expected. Even a formal invitation to a small dinner may be accepted or declined briefly in the third person; but if you are a friend of the family and must send regrets, a personal note to express your disappointment would be more courteous.

**2. Letters that must be specific.** Certain kinds of brief business notes are not "letters" in the ordinary sense; they should be as concise and specific as possible. Remember that when you write to a large office, "you" are simply a sheet of paper, one of thousands; whoever handles your correspondence is overworked; he cannot serve you unless you give him figures exactly. An order for goods must give the exact numerals used in a catalogue or describe the desired articles unmistakably. Your name and address should be carefully written, perhaps even printed out.

My dear Sirs:

Please send me three dozen "Aphro" pencils, of the H B grade, listed on page 92 of your catalogue number 37, at 84 cents a dozen. I enclose my check for \$2.52.

Yours truly,

An inquiry for a lost article must give every minute and place and number that may be useful in tracing what you have lost; an inquiry should contain no additional remarks of a vague kind.

My dear Sirs:

Please try to trace a large black walrus bag that I left on train 97, from St. Louis at 9:25 p. m., Thursday, December 26. I left the train at Milesville. The bag is marked with my initials, "B.M.H." I shall be glad to prove property by describing contents, and to reward the porter who turned it in.

Yours truly,

An appointment to meet a person must leave nothing in doubt.

My dear Paul:

Unless I telegraph you, I will meet you at the Palmer House at 10:30 in the morning, next Monday, July 6. I will stand at the counter where theater tickets are sold—for I don't think people will be thronging there in the forenoon.

Very sincerely,

**3. Formal and deferential letters.** When we write to some city or school official, even though we may not admire him personally, we take a tone of deference to his official position. The following is addressed to a member of the City Council.

My dear Sir:

Many residents of this ward, probably most of them, are much concerned about the laxness with which the ordinance requiring peddlers to be licensed is enforced. May we respectfully urge you to bring this matter up at the next Council meeting? I shall be glad to wait upon you and submit evidence if you can spare me ten minutes some forenoon this week and will appoint a time.

Yours very truly,

The next letter is to a mayor.

My dear Mr. Pettibone:

I have been appointed by the Dramatic Club of the High School to ask a favor of you. We are preparing our annual play, which is to be given this year in the Covent Theater, on Saturday night, April 17, at quarter past eight. This is a big undertaking. We feel that if we succeed we shall benefit our school, and that means our city. Are you willing to help us by being present as our guest? We want you to sit in a box and prove to the audience that school efforts are worth the attention of the community.

Yours respectfully,

For a note to an official, recognizing his official superiority, "respectfully" is proper, but never otherwise; it is not a word used merely to show respect.

Any letter to an official, or any letter written to the public in a newspaper, is in bad taste and will be ineffective unless it is deferential in tone. Any phrase that betrays lack of courtesy is weakness; politeness is strength.

**4. To persons whom we do not know.** If you are to use a somewhat formal tone, begin with "My dear Sir" or "My dear Madam"; but it is proper to use the person's name if you wish to show in a friendly way that you already feel some acquaintance. The first example is the most formal in this group. Notice that the writer begins by reminding a busy man of an interview and of his request for a written application. She makes a business-like statement of her qualifications, but is not in the least boastful or self-assertive. She does not ask for a chance to show *her merits*, but for a chance to find out whether she can fill *their needs*.

135 South Nelson Street  
Winnetka, Ohio  
February 3, 1920

Messrs. Stilson, Eager and Co.  
37 Front Street  
Cleveland, Ohio

My dear Sirs:

When I called on you yesterday you asked me to send a written application for a position in your office.

I am a graduate of the Spencer Business College School of Stenography, where I received a high rating for speed and accuracy. Will you let me do a day's work for you without pay, so that you may judge whether I can suit your needs?

I enclose a copy of Mr. Snedden's letter of recommendation.

Yours truly,

The second example is a polite reply, from a firm of mail-order jewelers, to a bad-tempered, unfair complaint from a customer who accused them of cheating.

My dear Madam:

We are always glad to refund money to a patron who is dissatisfied. If you will return the links, we will at once send you our check for the amount or give you credit on a new order, as you prefer. Please let us know your preference.

We assure you that the links are real jet in 14-karat gold, as described in our catalogue, and must insist that your local jeweler is mistaken.

Yours truly,

The third letter is to an alumnus of a school, from a girl in the Junior class, asking for a contribution.

My dear Mr. Ide:

Your school, you know, has a very bare entrance hall. We all feel, as Miss Estill has put it, that "the gloom of that place makes education forbidding." She wants to lighten up the gloom and has made us all enthusiastic for decorating the hall. You may know that our enthusiasm is bona fide when I tell you that our class alone has already pledged \$124, and will, I am sure, finally give more. We students hope to raise \$500. We want the alumni to give \$500 more. Will you help us? Of course we are grateful for small contributions, but we shall never succeed without some larger ones. Are you able to give a "larger one"?

Yours sincerely,

The fourth letter is from an editor of a school paper to an editor of another school paper. He knows that the boy to whom he writes would not call him "Mr." after they had been introduced, and so ventures (it might in other cases be a bit venturesome) to omit the "Mr." in writing.

My dear Beardsell:

Don't you think your editorial, "They Fail to Get Us," is rather rough on us Clinton fellows? We understand perfectly what you thought the arrangement for expenses was, and we acknowledge that you had a right to understand it that way. We aren't denying that you have a grievance. We will do all in our power to see that your manager loses no money. But what we said was—and we never claimed any more—that our manager did not *intend* to make any such offer. Do you "get us" now? Can't you make a correction in your next issue? We mustn't let a little misunderstanding stir up bad blood.

Yours for better feeling,

**5. Thank-you letters.** A person who has been visiting a friend or relative must write a letter of thanks as soon as he reaches home. Such a letter loses its point if it overdoes—that is, if it piles up a lot of extravagant expressions like "wonderful time" or "perfectly splendid visit." Try to comment on something that gave you pleasure—writing, for instance, a paragraph like this:

You spoke about "how little you had done" for me, and you really seemed to fear that you ought to have had a giddy time, with some new excitement every three hours. But the fact is that the long drive and the tennis and the diving from the dock were more pleasant to me than any social whirls you could have invented. And they did me good like a tonic. I was a new man when I came to the office this morning.

In writing thanks for a gift we fail if we bubble over with too many "lovely" adjectives; we must try to convey the reality of our pleasure.

My dear Charlotte:

By some lucky accident you thought of the birthday gift that I needed most. For all these years I have wanted a pocket

match-case, and yet I have never bought one. I might have gone through life without one if you had not had the lucky thought.

You are a designing person. You must know that every time I pull the case out of my pocket I shall be reminded of you, and you know that I am going to pull it out many times every day.

Affectionately,

**6. A letter of introduction.** You may some time have to write a note introducing your friend A to your friend B, a note for A to carry with him and present to B. Be brief; name some good reason for the introduction; *don't seal the envelope.*

My dear Arthur:

This will introduce Michael Davies, a fellow who has done me many a good turn, and whom I am sure you will enjoy. He has never seen Buffalo. Can you help him to see a little of it?

Yours as always,

**7. A letter of condolence.** The hardest kind of letter to write is a note to a friend expressing your sympathy when one of his family has died. No textbook can present a model of such a letter, for there is no model. A letter of condolence must be purely a personal expression of what you feel is fitting to say at such a time. But one hint may be useful: Don't put yourself into a state of unnatural solemnity or try to think up rhetorical words of comfort. Words will not be of the slightest comfort to your friend at such a time. He simply wants to know that you sympathize. If you can say that much, with some natural personal reference, you will help him.

## EXERCISES

### I. ANALYSIS OF LETTERS

Criticize the following letters by showing definitely the ways in which the writer (1) puts himself forward too much or just enough, (2) forgets his reader's state of mind or appeals to it effectively.

## 1

[This is from a large company that has several times requested the librarian in a small town to furnish a list of the periodicals to which the library subscribes. No objection need be made to the use of "we," as that is considered a good form in the majority of offices that carry on a large correspondence.]

Dear Sir:

We write to acknowledge the receipt of your remittance of \$18 to cover the renewal of the subscription for the *Readers' Guide* for the year 1920.

Perhaps you are not aware that \$18 is the maximum rate for the *Readers' Guide*—the rate that is applicable to libraries subscribing to sixty or more magazines that are included in the *Guide*.

From our knowledge of your town it seems to us that you are probably entitled to a lower rate than \$18. We are unable to give you this low rate until we receive the report from you showing just what magazines you take in your library. Although we have made several requests for this report, up to date we have no record of its receipt.

We believe it is only fair to give you another chance to save some money for your town; hence we are enclosing another copy of the report and hope that you will check off on this list the magazines to which your library subscribes. Also give us the information required at the bottom—income and book expenditure. We need this in order to make our records complete.

Assuring you that it is our earnest endeavor to give every library a square and fair deal, we are

Very truly yours,

## 2

[A young man who has been in a hospital writes to his sister.]

Dear Nellie:

I have decided to buy the nurse a wrist-watch. I might not have thought of this, but she told me once that she had been looking at wrist-watches in a window, and she seemed very much interested in them. Then later when she had been in town she came back and said, "Oh, I saw such beautiful watches down town today," and I guessed that she would like to have one to count the pulse of patients, etc. When I asked her if she would like to have one, she said yes. So I have

planned that in another month I will ask her to go down town with me and get her one for a present. She says that I know what she wants, and won't say right out anything about choosing, but I think I can guess. I am sure she will be pleased—at least I hope so.

With much love,

## 3

[Soliciting an advertisement.]

My dear Mr. Fithian:

I am trying out for the business staff of the *Millville Annual*, our yearly book, and was told that you might be interested in taking an advertisement.

The *Annual* is, like all other school books, devoted to the school life. It emphasizes athletics and, of course, prints pictures and short biographies of the Seniors.

Every student—there is an enrollment of over five hundred and thirty—gets one or more copies. By a little mental arithmetic one can clearly see that there are at least five hundred families who read the *Annual*, not once and then put it away, but again and again.

The rates are thirty dollars a page. If I can get one hundred dollars' worth of advertisements, I will be on the staff. I am not able to tell you of anybody who has bought space from me, for you're the first one I have asked. I hope to be able to tell the next man, however, that I have an advertisement.

Sincerely yours,

Emerson Fuller

## 4

[Accepting an invitation.]

Dear Bill:

I received your letter of November twenty-eighth yesterday in the evening mail, and was very glad to hear from you. As I have been very busy in my studies and in athletics, I have been unable to keep up a regular correspondence with you. Since football stopped just the other day, I will now be able to write more often.

I would like to visit you very much this coming vacation and in that way renew our acquaintance. As to the length of my visit, I could stay seven days at the most, because I would like to spend two weeks at least with my parents.

We had a dance up here a week ago tonight, which was a wonderful



success. There were about forty girls up for the party. The orchestra was fine.

Well, Bill, I will have to close now and do my studying.

Your friend,  
Barclay

5

[Thanking an uncle for a present.]

Dear Uncle John:

Thank you very much for the gun you gave me for my birthday. It sure was fine of you to send it to me. I have used it about every day since I got it.

Yesterday I went out hunting in the Berlin Woods in the northern part of town. I started about seven o'clock in the morning, and, as I expected to stay all day, I took my lunch. I met another fellow half way out. Before we got very far in the woods, we came upon a fox's hole. In this we placed some brush in order to block the entrance. In the other entrance, which was about twenty-five feet away, we placed some more brush, which we set fire to. We waited around for about ten minutes, and then, seeing the brush which was not burning move, we took it out. My companion was holding a stick. This he immediately had to use, because as soon as I took away the brush, out came a fox. My friend, seeing it, hit it over the head and killed it. Thus we had one animal to our credit. We then had lunch.

Give my love to Aunt Mary and keep loads for yourself.

Yours affectionately,  
Hamilton

6

[A letter of condolence.]

My dear Joe:

Perhaps you will realize how hard it is for me to put my sympathy for you over your recent loss into words. I am sure that you know that I cared for your brother just as much as if he were my brother as well as yours. Not only was his death a great blow to our city in general, but also to the whole state. His generosity and kindness to all who suffered, and his persecution of all that was bad and wicked, endeared him to the hearts of all his fellow statesmen.

But, Joe, this letter is not to enumerate his many good qualities, which are already so well known, but to try to make it easier for you to bear the blow. Doesn't it seem to you as if he had fulfilled his

mission in life and was taken away when it was thought best by more all-seeing wisdom than ours? And doesn't it seem as though no better time could have been chosen? He was at the height of his popularity and was loved by everyone—why wait longer until perhaps he had fallen into disgrace by some rash act—though I could not believe such a thing possible—and had lost all his power and glory?

But I will not say any more, Joe; I think I have expressed my point, and if it can cheer you up in the least bit, I hope with all my heart it will do so.

Your friend,  
Reyburn

## 7

[From a very busy professor to a teacher who had several weeks previously written him for some information.]

Dear Miss Neville:

On account of illness and death in our family I have not been able to live up to my program this fall. I am sure you will understand.

I have no specially good schedule to recommend, but if you should care to write to Mr. Oscar H. Winans of the Sheffield High School, he would, I am sure, be glad to tell you about their latest plans.

Have you seen our state course of study? If you have not, address the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

I hope to see you at Chicago.

Very sincerely,

## 8

[Thanks for a Christmas box from home.]

Dearest Mother:

When I received last Friday night that wonderful package you had sent me, you can really believe that I appreciated your trouble in getting it up. I can assure you also that I am not the only one who is thanking you for it.

Perhaps if I should attempt to describe what my room looked like from eight o'clock until nearly one o'clock last Saturday night, it would make the joy that we got out of the box more clear to you. There were six of our office force in the room besides Dick and myself, so that you can readily see what a rough-house there was in the room. When one of the fellows attempted to take the top off of the cheese jar, the party was very nearly broken up; after he had been struggling

for some time with it, the top blew off and about half of the contents of the jar with it. Finally, after some windows had been opened and the fellows were able to enter the room again, the fun was resumed.

Well, Mother dear, I must bring this letter to a close. Thanking you once again for the fine box, I remain

Your loving son,  
Terry

## 9

[From the circulation department of a magazine.]

My dear Sir:

We cannot believe that your failure to renew your subscription indicates lack of enthusiasm for the many hundreds of the best of stories, articles, editorials, and illustrations obtained by a \$2.00 yearly subscription.

This letter is not written to solicit your renewal, but to learn why you, as an old friend, are no longer with us. Can it be that we in the Circulation Department have failed to give you satisfactory service?

Yet we do not find your renewal upon our list. You must have had some good reason for letting your subscription lapse; and we will consider it a real favor if you will tell us what that reason is.

Very truly yours,

## 10

[Telling of the pleasures of a visit.]

Dear Donald:

I certainly had a great old time with you last winter vacation at Eastford. Although it was rather cold up there, we surely got along all right. Of course the water was almost too cold to swim in, and there wasn't much wind for sailing, but I'll say the other things were good. All the fellows here turn deep green with envy when I tell them about the tender venison I ate up there.

Do you remember the fishing trip that we took up Chasm River? Well, I just found out that your big trout was one of the largest ever caught around there. You probably could have won the Chasm Club Cup if you had been in the contest. It would be good to see the ~~fish~~ on the mantel of the large fireplace up there.

~~I~~ can't believe that I can ever forget the time when I nearly fell ~~off~~. If the stump hadn't been there, and if I hadn't been ~~there~~, I probably would not yet know enough not

to fool in a canoe. However, I surely learned my lesson then. Even now I remember how surprised I was when I found myself floundering in the water.

I heard that there was a smash-up on the railroad going up there and that five people were killed. I hope that now the railroad officials will have enough sense to run a good line up there.

Not long ago I received your letter inviting me to spend another winter at Eastford. I certainly hope that I will be allowed to go, as I know what kind of time I'll have up there.

Your pal

Fritz

11

[Complaining about noises at a summer resort.]

Editor of the *Hebron Chronicle*

Sir: The natural advantages of this region for summer rest and summer work have made a strong appeal to a considerable number of people. Those who have come to know the Hebron region are enthusiastic and their tendency is to locate here and to recommend the same course to their friends. They wish to settle here and become tax-payers.

It is a pity that the authorities should permit an utterly unnecessary drawback to exist and to grow, which is calculated to irritate any but the stone-deaf and to cause newcomers to hesitate about casting in their lot with the rest of us. I refer to the noisy motor craft. Certain owners are now defying the law that requires mufflers, and go about (beginning before five in the morning) with a racket like a machine-gun.

Now, it seems a pity to start a campaign to invoke the law against neighbors. Several of us would like first to make an appeal through your columns to those persons who are so recklessly disturbing the peace of the place. We do not care to proceed formally against a public nuisance unless it becomes necessary; but we realize that we have rights, as tax-paying members of the community, to the peace and quiet which we come here to enjoy. Must we invoke the law in their defense?

## II. ASSIGNMENTS FOR LETTER-WRITING

In the previous chapters there have been assignments for narrative, description, etc., in the form of letters. The additional

requirement for the writing assigned here is that your letters shall be adapted to the particular person to whom you write.

Write letters suitable for the following situations:

1. When you left home, you promised your small sister a story. Keep the promise.

2. On a journey you got into trouble, and a kind old gentleman helped you out. He asked you to write an account of what happened to you on the trip after he left the train. He will not be interested in a mere series of happenings. Plan a narrative that will amount to something—and that will, of course, show that you have not forgotten his kindness.

3. You have known rather intimately a young Australian who died in your city. His mother in Australia has learned your name and has asked you for a description of her boy's way of life as you knew it. Answer the letter.

4. Answer, as a piece of very practical exposition, this inquiry from another school: "How do you cultivate a school spirit?"

5. In a recent football game, played at your school, the visiting team almost won. They pushed the ball to your line on the fourth down; the two officials disagreed as to whether a touchdown had been scored; the ruling was that the visiting team had not scored. The visiting team were positive that they had scored, and are highly indignant; they threaten to stop athletic relations. Argue the case in a letter, trying to prove that "this school was not at fault."

## PART TWO

### THE PARAGRAPH

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#### CHAPTER VII

#### DIVIDING INTO PARAGRAPHS

##### A. DEFINITION

A paragraph is a division of a composition to show a change of topic. The commonest change of topic is to a different time—"And now the dawn breaks at the end of the fourth stage." A change of scene usually demands a new paragraph—"Forward from the bridge he beheld a landscape of wide valleys." The entry of a character is usually marked by paragraphing—"Their only attendant was the veteran Caspar" (followed by a description of the man). The next step in describing a process, a turn to the other side of an argument, a change to another part of a description—any change to a different section of the subject is shown by beginning a new paragraph.

##### B. PARAGRAPHING QUOTATIONS

In writing conversation each speaker's words are put into a separate paragraph. What is said about the speaker, or what introduces his speech, is put into the same paragraph.

"Beastly day for you to be out," he began, taking away her umbrella and holding his own over her head.

To be looked after was a novel experience to Jean, and she found herself half resenting his air of protection. "Oh, it's all right. You get used to it when you have to," she said with a short laugh. It was

not at all what she wanted to say to him, but the perversity of her nature was uppermost, and she had to say it.

"All the same, it is rough on you," he persisted.

The conversation in novels is sometimes "double paragraphed"—that is, one paragraph is begun for the introducing words, and then another is begun for the quotation. This style is not recommended for school writing.

Sometimes two or three brief quotations of different speakers may properly be included in one paragraph, if they belong together in developing one topic, like "opposing the draft."

One man, Rennenkamp, went so far as to say, "We can make a law to stop your boys from being taken." Another agitator went even farther in a public address: "I shall defy the officers of the county; and if they want to arrest anybody, they can arrest me." Such speeches from two such different men might seem to indicate a widespread opposition to the draft. But the truth is that—etc.

In the case of a long quotation that is in two or more paragraphs use quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph, but at the end of only the last one.

### C. THE PRINCIPLE OF "SEPARATE IMPORTANCE"

When a writer makes a paragraph, he announces to a reader, "Here is a somewhat different topic—such as a different speaker, a different scene, a different time. This is a rather important division of my whole composition." How authors apply that principle may be illustrated by the following passage from *Down North on the Labrador*. Dr. Grenfell is telling about a fisherman whose hand had accidentally been shot.

1. I was forced to put the position plainly to him. "Tim, boy, if what's left of your hand isn't cut off, it will probably cost you your life."

2. "Oh, doctor," he replied, "don't tell me that. It's not the hand I'm thinking of—but it's my right one, doctor. It will mean that we shall all starve together. Can you do nothing to help me save it, doctor? For God's sake say you can." And the great strong man, utterly overwrought, broke down and wept like a child.

Tim, we can try, if you decide to chance it. But you

should know that the risk to your life will be very great; and even if we do save what is left of the hand, it may be of no use to you."

4. "Give me an hour to think it over—won't you, doctor?—and then I'll give you my answer."

5. Laying the arm on a weighted board and sinking the whole into a trough of carbolized hot water, we went off, leaving only his comrades to give him counsel. The clock marked one hour exactly when we returned for his decision, for time then was of the utmost importance. The patient was quieter now. His piercing blue eyes seemed trying to look through me as I walked up to the couch on which he lay stretched out. He had evidently made up his mind—and his answer was without doubt final. There was no questioning the tone in which he said, "I'd rather be dead than live without her, doctor. You knows what that would mean, to live like that and see 'em starve. You must just do your best. They all knows you'll do that."

6. The preliminary operation had to be done without putting him to sleep—for he dreaded the idea as less familiar than pain, which he knew well enough how to bear—while we too were glad enough not to have to incur the additional risk of an anesthetic in his condition.

7. By the time we were through, the handy owner of our little house had ready for us a wooden arm-bath of large dimensions with well-rounded and sloping sides, capable of holding plenty of water. The whole was as neat and water-tight as the boats he built, its seams being well calked with pitch.

8. Into this the arm was slung, with real blocks and tackles from the ceiling, so as to be quite movable. And so the long struggle began.

Paragraphs 1-4 are dialogue between the doctor and Tim. Within the fifth paragraph there is a change of time, some change of scene, and a change from "we" to "he"; but there is no real change of topic; our interest is kept centered on one item: "what is the decision?" The sixth paragraph tells about "the surgical operation"; the seventh describes the "arm-bath"—a matter of distinct importance to a surgeon. Most of us would have put the last two sentences into the seventh paragraph, considering that the one topic is "keeping the arm anti-septic"; and that would make a proper paragraph. But the doctor wanted to show a different emphasis. To his mind the arm-bath is one topic; slinging the arm from the ceiling is "the beginning of a long struggle"—another topic entirely.



That idea of "separate importance" is the clue to paragraphing. An author may decide to give startling prominence to one word, and so may write it as a separate paragraph. A historian may, in the course of a long chapter, put a thousand words together as one individual item; for, considered as an episode in a series of great events, it is only one division of his composition. Editors sometimes write a series of one-sentence paragraphs designed to bombard a reader's mind, each statement being presented as the explosion of a high-power idea. Advertisers frequently use this sensational device to astound their readers. Such writing may succeed, or it may fail: all depends upon the tact and judgment of the writer.

The mental cannonading is usually freakish; it is not true paragraphing of a whole, unified composition, but a fusillade of little compositions which are fired successively at a reader. Normal divisions of ordinary themes are important sections of the whole, marking distinct changes of topic.

Read through the following article on "The California Prune Industry," making note of the points at which there is a turn to a different part of the subject.

This California industry started with a single tree which a Frenchman by the name of Peller planted there in 1870. It was soon found that the prune thrives on the Pacific coast, and that the hot, dry summer brought out its full saccharose qualities. The first orchard, planted in the Santa Clara valley, just south of San Francisco, now the prune-producing center of the state, was laid out by a Mr. Bradley. It commenced to yield in 1875, and, though only ten acres in extent, the trees in four years gave fruit to the value of \$14,000. The present California production [1909] reaches from 140 to 160 million pounds. An acre generally averages about one hundred trees, and it is not unusual for a tree to bear eight hundred pounds of fruit in one season. An interesting point is that the fruit is never grown on its own stocks, but from grafts on wild-plum, peach, and apricot stocks. The fruit is generally allowed to fall from the tree in order to secure the fullest ripeness and consequently the greatest possible sugar content. After being dried in the sun the prunes are graded into ten chief sizes, the bulk of the product being marketed in boxes of five pounds and upward. The smaller "fancy" packages include a number of glacé types

stuffed with apricots, nuts, ginger, etc. No fruit can boast a higher food value than prunes, for they contain large amounts of both protein and easily digestible sugar. It seems a pity that cheap humor and poor jokes should be laid so heavily on such excellent, serviceable fruit, which is always good, always in season, and capable of use in a great variety of ways.

Artemas Ward, *The Encyclopedia of Food*

How many changes of topic have you noted? If you have failed to note, do so before reading on. The comments that follow will be of less value if you cannot compare them with your own decisions.

It would be possible to argue thus: The first topic is "Peller's tree"; the second topic is "why the prunes thrive"; the third "Bradley plants an orchard"; the fourth "the yield of Bradley's orchard," and so on. For the topic of one sentence must always be somewhat different from the topic of the preceding sentence. Yet the difference from sentence to sentence is not usually sufficient to warrant paragraphing. It would be possible, on the other hand, to argue that there is no need of any division, for "the prune industry" is all one topic. That might be true in a long chapter that dealt with "California fruit-growing"; but it is not true if this composition is written as an essay complete in itself.

So we are deciding a question of degree: "Within the limits of this composition what are the principal thought-groups? Where does the topic change sufficiently to make division advisable?" Students are very likely to feel that the first sentence is "introductory" and ought to be set apart as a first paragraph. But this is not often true; the first sentence is usually merely a beginning of the first thought-group. In the composition that we are now discussing—which is about "this whole industry"—the author considered that his first topic was "the beginning of the industry"; he started his second paragraph with "The present California production" and included in it the sentence about grafting because that has to do with present orchard conditions. His third topic was "preparing for market," which he began with "The fruit is generally allowed to fall." His fourth

topic was "food value," beginning at "No fruit can boast." The outline of his four short paragraphs is:

1. Beginning of the industry.
2. Present production.
3. Preparing for market.
4. Food value.

Read the following passage attentively, noting the points where there appear to be changes of topic; then review the passage to revise your first judgments. The sentences are numbered for convenience in reference.

(1) The social position of Goldsmith had undergone a material change since the publication of *The Traveler*. (2) Before that event he was but partially known as the author of some clever anonymous writings, and had been a tolerated member of the club and the Johnson circle, without much being expected from him. (3) Now he had suddenly risen to literary fame and become one of the lions of the day. (4) The highest regions of intellectual society were now open to him; (4½) but he was not prepared to move in them with confidence and success. (5) Ballymahon had not been a good school of manners at the outset of life; nor had his experience as a "poor student" at colleges and medical schools contributed to give him the polish of society. (6) He had brought from Ireland, as he said, nothing but his "brogue and his blunders," and they had never left him. (7) He had traveled, it is true; but the continental tour, which in those days gave the finishing grace to the education of a patrician youth, had, with poor Goldsmith, been little better than a course of literary vagabondizing. (8) It had enriched his mind, deepened and widened the benevolence of his heart, and filled his memory with enchanting pictures; but it had contributed little to disciplining him for the polite intercourse of the world. (9) His life in London had hitherto been a struggle with sordid cares and sad humiliations. (10) "You scarcely can conceive," wrote he some time previously to his brother, "how much eight years of disappointment, anguish, and study have worn me down." (11) Several more years had since been added to the term during which he had trod the lowly walks of life. (12) He had been a tutor, an apothecary's drudge, a petty physician of the suburbs, a bookseller's hack, drudging for daily bread. (13) Each separate walk had been beset by its peculiar thorns and humiliations. (14) It is wonderful how his heart retained its gentleness and kindness through

all these trials; how his mind rose above the "meannesses of poverty," to which, as he says, he was compelled to submit; but it would be still more wonderful had his manners acquired a tone corresponding to the innate grace and refinement of his intellect. (15) He was near forty years of age when he published *The Traveler*, and was lifted by it into celebrity. (16) As is beautifully said of him by one of his biographers, "he has fought his way to consideration and esteem; but he bears upon him the scars of his twelve years' conflict; of the mean sorrows through which he has passed; and of the cheap indulgences he has sought relief and help from. (17) There is nothing plastic in his nature now. (18) His manners and habits are completely formed; and in them any further success can make little favorable change, whatever it may effect for his mind or genius."

How many paragraphs have you? You will not get the benefit of the suggestions that follow unless you have first thought out your own solutions.

The first four sentences are surely one topic: "Goldsmith has risen socially." Then we enter upon the consideration that he was not prepared to move in high society (4½); that at home and in colleges he had gained no polish (5 and 6); that he had not really "traveled," but had only vagabondized (7 and 8); that his London life had been sordid and anguished (9 and 10). Clearly these sentences are all working together to enforce the one topic: "he was not prepared for high society." Sentences 11, 12, and 13 continue to explain and impress that same idea; no division has yet been possible. Sentence 14 suggests a change—"his mind rose above poverty"; but this is only to emphasize the fact that "his *manners* had not acquired refinement." Sentences 15 and 16 say that he was "near forty" and "bore the scars of his mean sorrows." Sentences 17 and 18 say that his nature was no longer plastic, nor his manners changeable. The whole long series of statements is applied to enforce one statement: "Though he had achieved celebrity (1-4), his manners were not fitted for high society (4½-18)." There is no need of any division. We might possibly paragraph thus:

Sentences

1-4. Goldsmith has risen to fame.

- 4½-6. But he had gained no polish in early life.  
 7-8. But he had gained no polish in traveling.  
 9-14. But he had gained no polish in London.  
 15-18. But he had gained no polish by the time he was old.

That is a kind of time scheme; but it would not be real paragraphing, because each division after the first would be just one more scrap of contrast. The passage was written as a solid paragraph and can hardly be broken up.

Such a long, close-knit paragraph is seldom written in schools and is not given as a model theme; but it is useful as an illustration of the reason for *not* dividing a passage.

#### D. PARAGRAPHS OF ORDINARY LENGTH

Now that we have seen the extreme cases—the four short paragraphs about the prune industry and the very long one about Goldsmith—we may examine a composition that is like ordinary school writing in the length of its paragraphs. As you read, decide where the divisions should be made; then revise your judgment (if necessary) after you have finished reading.

(1) Professional baseball is an industry as well as a sport. (2) Millions of dollars are invested, and salaries of skilled players are astonishingly large. (3) The two major Leagues have a system of government; a system of employing paid umpires, sent where ordered, so that fair umpiring is assured; a system of hearing charges and acting upon them; a system of disciplining and fining unruly players; and so on. (4) The game can be kept square and sound only by constant care and unswerving discipline. (5) The special danger at this time seems to be from the forming of gambling syndicates through which very large sums of money are placed in bets, with an evident temptation toward corrupt practices to insure knowledge of results beforehand. (6) Once the baseball world went through a period of scandal and reformed itself. (7) Forty-five years ago, as Mr. A. G. Spalding (famous in his day as a member of the old Cincinnati Red Stockings) tells us in his work on the history of baseball: "Things were rotten. (8) Gambling in all its features of pool-selling and side-betting was

still openly engaged in. (9) A few players, too, had become so corrupt that nobody could be certain as to whether the issue of any game in which these players participated would be determined on its merits. (10) The occasional throwing of games was practiced by some, and no punishment was meted out to the offenders." (11) In 1876 the National League, the first of the great professional leagues, was formed. (12) It set to work to abolish such evils as those just mentioned. (13) In 1877 Hartford and Louisville teams played a series of games in Brooklyn to decide the championship. (14) Louisville had much the better record in winning games, but in the pool-rooms all the professional gamblers backed Hartford. (15) Hartford won, and on investigation four of the Louisville players were discharged and blacklisted out of organized baseball for "throwing the game." (16) Since then baseball has been as clean as any professional sport on such a large scale can be. (17) Baseball is a fine game, and it must be kept clean. (18) There is a good deal in the dictum of the "Sun and New York Herald" that "if the public should ever come to the conclusion that professional baseball is crooked, then the ownership of the best club in the country would not be worth a lead quarter."

The writer of this *Outlook* editorial divided it into five paragraphs:

1. Discipline in the baseball industry, sentences 1-4.
2. Gambling makes baseball unclean, sentence 5.
3. How gambling once made baseball "rotten," sentences 6-10.
4. How baseball was once freed from gambling, sentences 11-16.
5. Why baseball must be kept clean, sentences 17-18.

We might defend several changes in this grouping of the sentences. For example, number 5 might be made the first sentence of the third paragraph; school writers will seldom have need of a one-sentence paragraph. Again, number 6, which announces the topics of two paragraphs, might possibly have formed a paragraph by itself; but the editor follows a more usual and a better plan.

A good deal of latitude is allowed in grouping the sentences of compositions. Teachers often refrain from criticizing a questionable division, because they feel, "The writer is at liberty to

show that kind of emphasis if he chooses; I can see his reason." A student who shows a rational purpose can usually have his own way.

Any objection to a school writer's paragraphing is based on his carelessness: a change of time has not been marked; two scenes that cannot be blended are telescoped into one big mass of sentences; or two illustrations that belong together are split apart into fractional paragraphs. These are errors that a reasonable student sees as soon as they are pointed out to him. They are violations of a principle that he accepts: "I want to divide every time there is a real change of topic within the scale of my composition; I want to keep together in one paragraph all the sentences that deal with that one topic."

### EXERCISES

Divide the following passages into paragraphs. A convenient form for written work is to quote the first words of each paragraph and to give the topic—thus:

1. "A tidal wave and tornado"—the destruction of Galveston by flood and cyclone.
2. "When the waters subsided"—the ruined homes and the bodies of the dead.
3. "To succor and shelter"—the funeral pyres as seen by Clara Barton.

Never say that a paragraph is an "introduction" or a "conclusion," for that means nothing; every real paragraph has a topic and a purpose of its own. Always be *specific* in naming the topic—that is, do not trust to such vague expressions as "description of the storm," "description of the result of the storm," "arrival of Clara Barton." If a group of sentences describes a storm, there must be some outstanding facts that ought to be suggested in our outline. A true paragraph is concerned with something more than "the arrival" of a woman; it must contain some significant statements about what she saw or did; it is *these specific*

*facts* that must appear in our outline. A student may give a vague title without detecting the author's purpose; hunting for the *specific* terms reveals the nature of the topic.

This requirement of definiteness is far more than a mere form of exercise. The student who is allowed to give indefinite answers is not teaching himself anything about constructing his own paragraphs, because in his own writing he is always dealing with some particular engine or lunch or torn flag; he never can write about "a result" or "an arrival," but must always tell about "how happy this made Uncle Jasper" or "the tin horns that were blown when our train drew into the station." The student who names *specific* topics is learning more about making his own paragraphs.

1. Irving divided this passage into five paragraphs; it is doubtful whether a good reason can be given for more or fewer divisions.

(1) Well, sir, in the midst of my retrenchment, my retirement, and my studiousness, I received news that my uncle was dangerously ill. (2) I hastened on the wings of an heir's affections to receive his dying breath and his last testament. (3) I found him attended by his faithful valet, old Iron John; by the woman who occasionally worked about the house; and by the foxy-headed boy, young Orson, whom I had occasionally hunted about the park. (4) Iron John gasped a kind of asthmatical salutation as I entered the room, and received me with something almost like a smile of welcome. (5) The woman sat blubbering at the foot of the bed; and the foxy-headed Orson, who had now grown up to be a lubberly lout, stood gazing in stupid vacancy at a distance. (6) My uncle lay stretched upon his back. (7) The chamber was without fire, or any of the comforts of a sick-room. (8) The cobwebs flaunted from the ceiling. (9) The tester was covered with dust, and the curtains were tattered. (10) From underneath the bed peeped out one end of his strong box. (11) Against the wainscot were suspended rusty blunderbusses, horse-pistols, and a cut-and-thrust sword, with which he had fortified his room to defend his life and treasure. (12) He had employed no physician during his illness; and from the scanty relics lying on the table, seemed almost to have denied himself the assistance of a cook. (13) When I entered the room, he was lying motionless, his eyes fixed and his mouth open: at the first look I thought him a corpse. (14) The noise of my entrance made him turn



his head. (15) At the sight of me a ghastly smile came over his face, and his glazing eye gleamed with satisfaction. (16) It was the only smile he had ever given me, and it went to my heart. (17) "Poor old man!" thought I, "why should you force me to leave you thus desolate, when I see that my presence has the power to cheer you?" (18) "Nephew," said he, after several efforts, and in a low, gasping voice, "I am glad you are come. (19) I shall now die with satisfaction. (20) Look," said he, raising his withered hand, and pointing, "look in that box on the table; you will find that I have not forgotten you." (21) I pressed his hand to my heart, and the tears stood in my eyes. (22) I sat down by his bedside, and watched him, but he never spoke again. (23) My presence, however, gave him evident satisfaction; for every now and then, as he looked to me, a vague smile would come over his visage, and he would feebly point to the sealed box on the table. (24) As the day wore away, his life appeared to wear away with it. (25) Toward sunset his head sank on the bed, and lay motionless, his eyes grew glazed, his mouth remained open, and thus he gradually died.

2. The natural grouping of these 26 sentences is in four paragraphs. There may be a difference of opinion about sentences 16 and 17, since they indicate a decided change of scene; but notice that the captain is still below deck in 17. The three brief quotations may well be kept together within the last paragraph.

(1) When I left John Steadiman in charge, the ship was still going at a great rate through the water. (2) The wind still blew right astern. (3) Though she was making great way, she was under shortened sail, and had no more than she could easily carry. (4) All was snug, and nothing complained. (5) There was a pretty sea running, but not a high sea neither, nor at all a confused one. (6) I turned in, as we seamen say, all standing. (7) The meaning of that is I did not pull my clothes off—no, not even so much as my coat; though I did my shoes, for my feet were badly swelled with the deck. (8) There was a little swing-lamp alight in my cabin. (9) I thought, as I looked at it before shutting my eyes, that I was so tired of darkness and troubled by darkness that I could have gone to sleep best in the midst of a million of flaming gas-lights. (10) That was the last thought I had before I went off, except the prevailing thought that I should not be able to get to sleep at all. (11) I dreamed that I was back at Penrith again, and was trying to get round the church, which had altered its shape

very much since I last saw it, and was cloven all down the middle of the steeple in a most singular manner. (12) Why I wanted to get round the church I don't know; but I was as anxious to do it as if my life depended on it. (13) Indeed, I believe it did in the dream. (14) For all that, I could not get round the church. (15) I was still trying, when I came against it with a violent shock, and was flung out of my cot against the ship's side. (16) Shrieks and a terrific outcry struck me far harder than the bruising timbers, and amidst sounds of grinding and crashing, and a heavy rushing and breaking of water—sounds I understood too well—I made my way on deck. (17) It was not an easy thing to do, for the ship heeled over frightfully, and was beating in a furious manner. (18) I could not see the men as I went forward, but I could hear that they were hauling in sail, in disorder. (19) I had my trumpet in my hand, and, after directing and encouraging them in this till it was done, I hailed first John Steadiman, and then my second mate, Mr. William Rames. (20) Both answered clearly and steadily. (21) Now, I had practiced them and all my crew, as I have ever made it a custom to practice all who sail with me, to take certain stations and wait my orders, in case of any unexpected crisis. (22) When my voice was heard hailing, and their voices were heard answering, I was aware, through all the noises of the ship and sea, and all the crying of the passengers below, that there was a pause. (23) "Are you ready, Rames?" (24) "Aye, aye, sir!" (25) "Then light up, for God's sake!" (26) In a moment he and another were burning blue-lights, and the ship and all on board seemed to be enclosed in a mist of light, under a great black dome.

3. In the third chapter of *Tom Brown's School Days* there is a very long paragraph describing an episode in Tom's childhood. The author wanted this to appear as a single topic: that period of his hero's life. But if this narrative were a whole composition, it would have to be paragraphed.

(1) The moment Tom's lessons were over, he would now get him down to this corner by the stables, and watch till the boys came out of school. (2) He prevailed on the groom to cut notches for him in the bark of the elm, so that he could climb into the lower branches, and there he would sit watching the school door, and speculating on the possibility of turning the elm into a dwelling-place for himself and friends after the manner of the Swiss Family Robinson. (3) But the school hours were long and Tom's patience short, so that soon he began to descend into the street, and go and peep in at the school door and

the wheelwright's shop, and look out for something to while away the time. (4) Now the wheelwright was a choleric man, and, one fine afternoon, returning from a short absence, found Tom occupied with one of his pet adzes, the edge of which was fast vanishing under our hero's care. (5) A speedy flight saved Tom from all but one sound cuff on the ears, but he resented this unjustifiable interruption of his first essays at carpentering, and still more the further proceedings of the wheelwright, who cut a switch and hung it over the door of his workshop, threatening to use it upon Tom if he came within twenty yards of his gate. (6) So Tom, to retaliate, commenced a war upon the swallows who dwelt under the wheelwright's eaves, whom he harassed with sticks and stones, and being fleeter of foot than his enemy, escaped all punishment, and kept him in perpetual anger. (7) Moreover, his presence about the school door began to incense the master, as the boys in that neighborhood neglected their lessons in consequence; and more than once he issued into the porch, rod in hand, just as Tom beat a hasty retreat. (8) And he and the wheelwright, laying their heads together, resolved to acquaint the Squire with Tom's afternoon occupations; but in order to do it with effect, determined to take him captive and lead him away to judgment fresh from his evil-doings. (9) This they would have found some difficulty in doing, had Tom continued the war single-handed, or rather single-footed, for he would have taken to the deepest part of Pebbly Brook to escape them; but, like other active powers, he was ruined by his alliances. (10) Poor Jacob Doodle-calf could not go to school with the other boys, and one fine afternoon, about three o'clock (the school broke up at four), Tom found him ambling about the street, and pressed him into a visit to the school porch. (11) Jacob, always ready to do what he was asked, consented, and the two stole down to the school together. (12) Tom first reconnoitered the wheelwright's shop, and seeing no signs of activity, thought all safe in that quarter, and ordered at once an advance of all his troops upon the school porch. (13) The door of the school was ajar, and the boys seated on the nearest bench at once recognized and opened a correspondence with the invaders. (14) Tom, waxing bold, kept putting his head into the school and making faces at the master when his back was turned. (15) Poor Jacob, not in the least comprehending the situation, and in high glee at finding himself so near the school, which he had never been allowed to enter, suddenly, in a fit of enthusiasm, pushed by Tom, and ambling three steps into the school, stood there, looking round him and nodding with a self-approving smile. (16) The master, who was stooping over a boy's slate, with his back to the door, became aware of something unusual, and turned

quickly round. (17) Tom rushed at Jacob, and began dragging him back by his smock frock, and the master made at them, scattering forms and boys in his career. (18) Even now they might have escaped, but that in the porch, barring retreat, appeared the crafty wheelwright, who had been watching all their proceedings. (19) So they were seized, the school dismissed, and Tom and Jacob led away to Squire Brown as lawful prize, the boys following to the gate in groups, and speculating on the result.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PASSING FROM ONE PARAGRAPH TO THE NEXT

#### A. CONFUSION BY CARELESS TRANSITION

In Chapter VII the emphasis was all put upon "separate topics." If a student had only that one lesson, he might think of paragraphs as blocks set up in a row to form a composition. Yet they are merely stages in one straight line of progress; a reader ought to pass easily from one to the other; in good composition we find that each "transition" (a passing over) is so contrived that we read along smoothly from one paragraph topic to the next.

The great principle that guides a writer in arranging smooth transitions is this: "I now have the reader's attention directed to a certain topic; he does not know what is coming; I must not jump him blindfold into a new scene, but must show him the way to it." If a writer is telling about laying shingles on a roof, his mind may go—quite logically and in a fraction of a second—to the hardware store where he bought the hammer; but if a reader, who has been on the roof with him and intent on driving nails, suddenly finds himself at a show-case full of knives and scissors, he feels like Alice in Wonderland. Is it necessary to fly away from the roof and to skip back in time? Possibly it is. If so, the reader must be warned of the change and shown where he is going.

Read the following two paragraphs attentively and see how you feel by the time you have reached the third sentence of the second paragraph.

Naturally the masses began to degenerate physically, mentally, and, particularly, morally. It is really the masses that are the lifeblood of a nation; so when they degenerate, the nation degenerates too.

Some writers like Mrs. Browning realized this; and their writings, combined with the terrible plagues and disasters which occurred in the factories and mines, at last waked the people of England up. Then bills were passed in Parliament which have gradually helped the conditions.

The results of the Industrial Revolution have been the same in all countries. The laborers have been wretched, not only in England, but in all countries of the world. To protect themselves they have formed unions. As a result, one of the great questions of all countries today is the question of healing the strife which has been going on so long between the working classes and the capitalists.

The writer carries our mind in his first paragraph up to "bills which have gradually helped conditions"; hence we naturally continue along that line of thought and suppose that "results" means "those better conditions that we have just reached." Lo and behold! in the second sentence we bump squarely into "the laborers have been wretched"; we feel as if we were walking in the dark and must strike a match to find the way. Yet the writer's mind was not very illogical. If he had *made a different transition*, all would have been clear. When our minds were full of "improved conditions in England," he should have said: "But in spite of good laws the laborers of England—and, indeed, of all countries—have been wretched." Thus he would have carried us easily along from "better conditions in England" to "wretchedness all over the world." That is about as wide a gap as there could ever be between the topics of two consecutive paragraphs, and yet the chasm is safely bridged by one thoughtful transition sentence.

#### B. FOURTEEN SKILFUL TRANSITIONS

A good series of these transitions may be seen in Kenneth Grahame's sketch of a day in a small boy's life, called *Dies Irae*. Because the author had to follow the quick jumps of childish adventure and fancy as a unified story, it was specially necessary for him to contrive a smooth passing from one paragraph to the next. Any student who will carefully observe the fourteen transitions made by this skilled workman, and will then turn back to

each one as the comment in the text directs, can learn a great deal by one hour of study.

(The title means *The Day of Wrath*. Martha is a servant in an English family of five children: Edward, who is away at school; "I," who is the next son; Harold, the youngest son; and two girls.)

1. Martha began it; and yet Martha was not really to blame. . . . Breakfast was just over; the sun was summoning us, imperious as a herald with clamor of trumpet; I ran upstairs to her with a broken shoelace in my hand, and there she was, crying in a corner, her head in her apron. Nothing could be got from her but the same dismal succession of sobs that would not have done, that struck and hurt like a physical beating; and meanwhile the sun was getting impatient, and I wanted my shoelace.

2. Inquiry below stairs revealed the cause. Martha's brother was dead, it seemed—her sailor brother, Billy; drowned in one of those strange far-off seas it was our dream to navigate one day. We had known Billy well, and appreciated him. . . . There had never been anyone like Billy in his own particular sphere; and now he was drowned, they said, and Martha was miserable, and—and I couldn't get a new shoelace. They told me that Billy would never come back any more, and I stared out of the window at the sun which came back, right enough, every day, and their news conveyed nothing whatever to me. Martha's sorrow hit home a little, but only because the actual sight and sound of it gave me a dull, bad sort of pain low down inside—a pain not to be actually located. Moreover, I was still wanting my shoelace.

3. This was a poor sort of beginning to a day that, so far as outside conditions went, had promised so well. I wandered off to meet the girls, conscious of a jar and a discordance in the scheme of things. [This long paragraph explains that the four children had recently sent a big hamper of food and presents to Edward at his school; that Edward's acknowledgment had been very curt and ungrateful; and that the girls were angry and sniffing.] To Harold and to me the letter seemed natural and sensible enough. . . . The girls, however, in their obstinate way, persisted in taking their own view of the slight. Hence it was that I received my second rebuff of the morning.

4. Somewhat disheartened, I made my way downstairs and out into the sunlight, where I found Harold, playing *Conspirators* by himself on the gravel. . . . It seemed an excellent occasion for being a

black puma. So I launched myself on him, with the appropriate howl, rolling him over on the gravel.

5. Life may be said to be composed of things that come off and things that don't come off. This thing, unfortunately, was one of the things that didn't come off. From beneath me I heard a shrill cry of, "Oh, it's my sore knee!" And Harold wriggled himself free from the puma's clutches, bellowing dismally. . . . I made halfway advances, however, suggesting we should lie in ambush by the edge of the pond and cut off the ducks. . . . A fascinating pursuit this, and strictly illicit. But Harold would none of my overtures, and retreated to the house, wailing with full lungs.

6. Things were getting simply infernal. I struck out blindly for the open country; and even as I made for the gate, a shrill voice from a window bade me keep off the flower-beds. . . . What was wanted now was a complete change of environment. . . . There were pleasant corners where you dived for pearls and stabbed sharks in the stomach with your big knife. No relations would be likely to come interfering. . . . And yet I did not wish—just yet—to have done with relations entirely. They should be made to feel their position first, to see themselves as they really were, and to wish—when it was too late—that they had behaved more 'properly.

7. Of all professions, the army seemed to lend itself most thoroughly to the scheme. . . . And the army would march in, and the guns would rattle and leap along the village street, and last of all you—you, the General, the fabled hero—you would enter, on your coal-black charger. . . . You have a coal-black horse, and a saber-cut, and you can afford to be very magnanimous. But all the same you give them a good talking-to.

8. This pleasant conceit simply ravished my soul for some twenty minutes, and then the old sense of injury began to well up afresh, and to call for new plasters and soothing sirups. This time I took refuge in happy thoughts of the sea. The sea was my real sphere, after all. . . . In due course the sloop or felucca would turn up—it always did—the rakish-looking craft, black of hull, low in the water, and bristling with guns; the jolly Roger flapping overhead, and myself for sole commander. . . . In all the repertory of heroes none is more truly magnanimous than your pirate chief.

9. When at last I brought myself back from the future to the actual present, I found that these delectable visions had helped me over a longer stretch of road than I had imagined; and I looked around and took my bearings. To the right of me was a long, low building of gray stone. . . . I had wandered up there one day, and had been



treated as friend and comrade. . . . They had also fed me in their dining-hall. . . . I had brought away from that visit, and kept by me for many days, a sense of cleanness, of the freshness that pricks the senses—the freshness of cool spring water; and the large swept spaces of the rooms, the red tiles, and the oaken settles suggested a comfort that had no connection with padded upholstery.

10. On this particular morning I was in much too unsociable a mind for paying friendly calls. Still, something in the aspect of the place harmonized with my humor. . . . Thereupon, out of the depths of my morbid soul swam up a new and fascinating idea. . . . A severer line of business, perhaps, such as I had read of; something that included black bread and a hair-shirt. There should be vows, too—irrevocable, blood-curdling vows; and an iron grating. . . . “For me, I am vowed and dedicated, and my relations henceforth are austerity and holy works. Once a month, should you wish it, it shall be your privilege to come and gaze at me through this very solid grating; but—” *Whack!*

11. A well-aimed clod of garden soil, whizzing just past my ear, starred on a tree-trunk behind, spattering me with dirt. The present came back to me in a flash. . . . It was the gardener's boy, I knew well enough. . . . Hastily picking up a nice sticky clod in one hand, with the other I delicately projected my hat beyond the shelter of the tree-trunk. I had not fought with Redskins all these years for nothing.

12. As I had expected, another clod, of the first class for size and stickiness, took my poor hat full in the center. Then, Ajax-like, shouting terribly, I issued from shelter and discharged my ammunition. . . . I got another clod in at short range; we clinched on the brow of the hill, and rolled down to the bottom together. When he had shaken himself free and regained his legs, he trotted smartly off in the direction of his mother's cottage; but over his shoulder he discharged at me both imprecation and deprecation, menace mixed up with an undercurrent of tears.

13. But as for me, I made off smartly for the road, my frame tingling, my head high, with never a backward look at the Settlement of suggestive aspect, or at my well-planned future which lay in fragments around it. Life had its jollities, then; life was action, contest, victory! The present was rosy once more, surprises lurked on every side, and I was beginning to feel villainously hungry.

14. Just as I gained the road a cart came rattling by, and I rushed for it, caught the chain that hung below, and swung thrillingly between the dizzy wheels. . . . Abandoning the beaten track, I then struck

homeward through the fields. . . . As I came forth on the common, Harold broke out of an adjoining copse and ran to meet me, the morning rain-clouds all blown away from his face. . . . As we passed in at our gate, the girls were distantly visible, gardening with a zeal in cheerful contrast to their heartsick lassitude of the morning. "There's bin another letter come today," Harold explained, "and the hamper got joggled about on the journey, and the presents worked down into the straw and all over the place. One of 'em turned up inside the cold duck. And that's why they weren't found at first. And Edward said, Thanks awfully!"

15. I did not see Martha again until we were all re-assembled at tea-time, when she seemed red-eyed and strangely silent, neither scolding nor finding fault with anything. Instead, she was very kind and thoughtful with jams and things, feverishly pressing unwonted delicacies on us, who wanted little pressing enough. Then suddenly, when I was busiest, she disappeared; and Charlotte whispered me presently that she had heard her go to her room and lock herself in. This struck me as a funny sort of proceeding.

#### C. COMMENT ON THE FOURTEEN TRANSITIONS

To present these mangled fragments of fifteen paragraphs is a crime against a good story; for the life is gone, and what remains is a lot of odds and ends. Yet these remnants are better for our study of transitions, since we are not distracted by the interesting contents and can fix our attention on "passing from each paragraph to the next."

We shall be better able to draw the lessons from this bit of literary workmanship if we realize at the outset the author's principal purpose. He is doing far more than to show us a string of episodes in one quarrelsome day of childhood; he is setting these little worries and fancies of a child against a background of the deep sorrow of an older person; the small boy feels "a dull, bad sort of pain" at Billy's death, but his real concern is with his shoelace. The whole sketch is a picture—tender and whimsical, yet deeply ironical—of childish trouble, which stands out in high relief against Martha's bereavement.

The first paragraph tells about "the dismal succession of sobs from Martha." The real calamity is not "wanting my shoe-

lace" (though the paragraph closes with those words), but that "Martha will not attend to my shoelace." From this first topic we are transferred to the second by the little sentence, "Inquiry revealed the cause." The second paragraph is all about "the cause of Martha's failing to get me a shoelace"; it is brought to a close with the child's view of the trouble, so that we can move on naturally to the child's further troubles. "This," says the third paragraph, "was a poor beginning to the day; I was conscious of jar and discordance as I wandered on to the next trouble." We are getting straight on into the story.

Does all this seem obvious? Does it seem unnecessary to point out three such simple steps? If you think so, put yourself in Mr. Grahame's place as he sits at his desk planning. In his mind are all the elements of a complicated situation in a family: the death of Billy, which looms up as the most prominent fact; the sorrow of Martha; the sympathy of the two girls, who wept with her; the concern of the other servants; what the father and mother had said and done; what the children had for breakfast; how they talked all the time about Edward's letter that had come the night before; how the boys quarreled with the girls; how Martha had been brave and cheerful while she served the children's breakfast, but had run upstairs and broken down when Billy's name was mentioned; how the boy broke his shoelace; who told the boy about Billy's death; how the girls were not as sympathetic as they would have been if they had not been so offended by Edward's failing to thank them; how Harold was not told the sad news, because he was so young; how and when Harold had gone outdoors; why the girls were in the schoolroom when the boys did not have to be there; how Harold also was rebuffed by the girls, and how Martha played with him at a quarter past nine. These are only a few samples of the hundred items that are all spread out on one level in Mr. Grahame's mind. Which shall he select, and which shall he not mention at all? With which one shall he begin? What shall be the second? How shall he move straight along from the first to the second and on to the third?

The amateur might naturally have started by describing the sulky mood of the girls, followed this with a quarrel at the breakfast table, told next about how the shoelace was broken, then could have told of the news of Billy's death, after which would have been the boy's interview with Martha, his encounter with the girls in the schoolroom, and Martha's self-control with Harold at a quarter past nine. That could have been a correct time order. By simply saying "then, then, then" the transitions could have been made from topic to topic. But we should have been swung back and forth from one story element to another. The opening situation is a child's little trouble in contrast to a great grief; we follow a series of childish troubles which are outlined sharply on this grief; the child comes to "jollities and victory," to the cheerful second situation of the story when Edward has said, "Thanks *awfully*"; this happy change is still shown against the unchanging background of Martha's grief.

So Mr. Grahame began with Martha's sobbing; told in his second paragraph about the cause of her grief, which did not affect the boy very much; except that (third paragraph) it made a bad beginning of the day, which grew worse after he encountered the girls. Mr. Grahame does not leap suddenly from "the obstinate way of the girls" to Harold outdoors. He rounds out his episode of the third paragraph by saying, "Hence I received a second rebuff." We are prepared for the next step.

"Somewhat disheartened," begins the fourth paragraph, continuing the mood that we have been in, "I made my way downstairs." Then we are ready for whatever may happen. The boy's mood becomes cheerful; he plays that he is a puma, and "rolls Harold over on the gravel." The next topic is "the quarrel." The author could very well have begun with Harold's exclamation, but chose a more interesting way: he abruptly states a general maxim about "things that don't come off," and not until his second sentence does he carry on the previous topic with "this thing was one that didn't come off." The reader has not been sidetracked, but is pleased at this novel way of keeping him on the track.

The episode ends with "Harold wailing." The author does not plump us immediately from tears to flower-beds. No, he carries on the "wailing" impression for a moment by saying that "things were getting infernal." That prepares us for "striking out blindly"—and for going anywhere. We are taken on a gloomy flight of imagination far away from all overbearing relations; the boy thinks of what he might do in remote parts of the world—he might be a pearl-fisher. Still he does not hate relations entirely; he merely wishes them to be sorry for "not behaving more properly."

The beginning of the seventh paragraph seems abrupt: we jump to "the army as a profession." But in the full form of the story the sixth paragraph is a long one, all bearing on the question: "where can I go? what can I do in life?" So that "of all the professions" is an evident carrying on of the previous topic. This imaginary General is "magnanimous"; he takes no revenge on the relations, but he does, all the same, "give them a good talking-to."

The author who has thus centered our attention upon a General on a coal-black charger does not plunge us into the briny deep in the next sentence. He shows us how to reach the ocean: "This conceit ravished my soul for twenty minutes, and then the old sense of injury"—there is no difficulty in getting to sea now. And when we have concluded the pirate flight, we are not stunned by suddenly hitting ground. There is a parachute at the beginning of the ninth paragraph: "When *at last* I brought myself back"; we have walked a long way; we get our bearings; we are at the "Settlement." What kind of place is this? By repeating several past-perfect tenses the author tells how he had once visited the Settlement and had found out what it was like: it was a clean place, a place of hard tiles and hard oak settles, where life was not upholstered. That visit *had been made some time ago*; therefore we are carefully led up to the present at the opening of the tenth paragraph: "On this morning, however, I was not in a mood to visit." Still in one way the place fitted his mood. It suggested a new line of fancy. And thus the reader has passed

with perfect ease from the deck of the felucca to the monkish cell, at the grating of which stand the penitent relations.

"Whack!" No leisurely transfer this time, but a real transition, nevertheless. That flight of fancy stops, and we know that it has stopped, and we know that it has been stopped by some very material missile from the actual world; we want to know what made the whack. The eleventh paragraph immediately tells us, and goes on to describe the ruse that the child uses to get the better of the gardener's boy. The passage to the twelfth paragraph amounts to this: "(11) I was using an Indian trick; (12) it succeeded."

It succeeded so well that the gardener's boy went away "discharging threats mixed up with tears." That is *his* defeat; "but as for me" swings us on to the "victory" and "the rosy present" of the hero. Now comes an odd device: the return from melancholy brooding to normal, healthy life is shown by a brief clause at the end of the thirteenth paragraph: "I was beginning to feel villainously hungry." And instead of saying in so many words, "wanted to get home in a hurry," the author speaks of rushing for a rattling cart. To be sure, an inattentive reader may not catch the full meaning, but an artist is not always bound to cater to inattentive people. The fourteenth paragraph describes the return journey, including the glad news learned from Harold at the gate.

Then the author chooses to be entirely abrupt. There are two reasons. In the first place, a sharp change (like the beginning of the fifth paragraph) is sometimes a pleasant variation; if a reader is sure that his course is carefully charted, he may enjoy an unexpected turn occasionally; if the sign-posts are too similar or too numerous, they become monotonous. In the second place, this point is clearly the conclusion of the child's part of the story, which has now ended happily; we are well prepared for a reference to the Martha story, which can never end happily. Abrupt as the change is, we are not transferred to anything unexpected, but to that contrast which has been in our minds all the while and which it is appropriate to mention at this moment.

## D. TAKE THE READER WITH YOU

It sometimes happens in well-linked writing that a transition sentence seems to belong as well at the end of one paragraph as at the beginning of the next, because it refers to both topics.

For example, Ruskin once chose to conclude a paragraph with "I must define the two kinds of books before I go farther," thus announcing in one paragraph what he was going to do in the next. Barrie did the same kind of thing when two of his paragraphs were about

1. Jean's perplexity.
2. Consulting Haggart about her perplexity.

He closed the first paragraph with "In her perplexity she decided to consult wise Tammas Haggart." Such cases are exceptional. You might hunt for hours before you could find another example. Nearly always, as you turn page after page of a novel or essay, you will see that the first reference to a new person or another scene or the next turn of thought is at the beginning of the new paragraph. That shows the safe rule for school practice. If a "definition" is a change of topic, begin the new paragraph with "I must define." If "consulting Haggart" is a new idea, begin the new paragraph with "She decided to consult Tammas Haggart."

In his last transition Mr. Grahame did not rely on any "word hook" to link his paragraphs together; he knew just what the next step was to be, just why he was going to take it suddenly, and just how it would be agreeable to the reader. That is the whole secret of passing properly from any paragraph to the next one. The writer who is always sympathetic with the reader, who keeps in mind what this topic is and what the next one is, who knows why he presents topics in that order—such a writer is almost sure to make smooth transitions, whether or not he thinks about using reference words like "at this time" or "a little farther on." And a writer who is not thus alert and provident about his topics can never link his paragraphs securely by simply putting in "at this time" or "however" or "as I have said before." Co-

herence between paragraphs is not a matter of words and phrases; it is a matter of noticing where we are taking the reader.

## EXERCISES

### I. STUDY OF GOOD EXAMPLES

Read the following selections with care, finding the answer to two questions about each paragraph: (1) What is the central topic, the principal idea? (2) What words near the beginning of the next paragraph carry on this idea? As a mere exercise in finding the "link-words" this would not be worth the large amount of space required to print the selections. Regard the exercise as much more than that easy task. It is a requirement to observe the whole framework of the compositions and to describe briefly how the parts are put together.

The following is a model for written work; the numbers refer to the paragraphs; the quoted expressions are the "link," or "carry-on," words; the other words tell the paragraph topics.

1. Martha would not attend to my shoelace.
2. "Inquiry revealed the cause"; Martha's brother Billy has been drowned.
3. "This was a poor beginning"; quarrel with the girls because of Edward's letter.

### Finding the Chimæra

[The hero Bellerophon, on the winged horse Pegasus, prepares to encounter the Chimæra.]

1. As soon as they had eaten their morning meal, and drunk some sparkling water from a spring called Hippocrene, Pegasus held out his head, of his own accord, so that his master might put on the bridle. Then, with a great many playful leaps and airy caperings, he showed his impatience to be gone; while Bellerophon was girding on his sword, and hanging his shield about his neck, and preparing himself for battle. When everything was ready, the rider mounted and (as was his custom when going a long distance) ascended five miles perpendicularly, so as the better to see whither he was directing his course.



He then turned the head of Pegasus toward the east, and set out for Lycia. In their flight they overtook an eagle, and came so nigh him, before he could get out of their way, that Bellerophon might easily have caught him by the leg. Hastening onward at this rate, it was still early in the forenoon when they beheld the lofty mountains of Lycia, with their deep and shaggy valleys. If Bellerophon had been told truly, it was in one of those dismal valleys that the hideous Chimæra had taken up its abode.

2. Being now so near their journey's end, the winged horse gradually descended with his rider; and they took advantage of some clouds that were floating over the mountain-tops, in order to conceal themselves. Hovering on the upper surface of a cloud, and peeping over its edge, Bellerophon had a pretty distinct view of the mountainous part of Lycia, and could look into all its shadowy vales at once. At first there appeared to be nothing remarkable. It was a wild, savage, and rocky tract of high and precipitous hills. In the more level part of the country there were the ruins of houses that had been burned, and, here and there, the carcasses of dead cattle, strewn about the pastures where they had been feeding.

3. "The Chimæra must have done this mischief," thought Bellerophon. "But where can the monster be?"

4. As I have already said, there was nothing remarkable to be detected, at first sight, in any of the valleys and dells that lay among the precipitous heights of the mountains. Nothing at all; unless, indeed, it were three spires of black smoke, which issued from what seemed to be the mouth of a cavern, and clambered sullenly into the atmosphere. Before reaching the mountain-top these three black smoke-wreaths mingled themselves into one. The cavern was almost directly beneath the winged horse and his rider, at the distance of about a thousand feet. The smoke, as it crept heavily upward, had an ugly, sulphurous, stifling scent, which caused Pegasus to snort and Bellerophon to sneeze. So disagreeable was it to the marvelous steed (who was accustomed to breathe only the purest air) that he waved his wings and shot half a mile out of the range of this offensive vapor.

5. But, on looking behind him, Bellerophon saw something that induced him first to draw the bridle, and then to turn Pegasus about. He made a sign, which the winged horse understood, and sank slowly through the air, until his hoofs were scarcely more than a man's height above the rocky bottom of the valley. In front, as far off as you could throw a stone, was the cavern's mouth, with the three smoke-wreaths oozing out of it. And what else did Bellerophon behold there?

6. There seemed to be a heap of strange and terrible creatures curled up within the cavern. Their bodies lay so close together that

Bellerophon could not distinguish them apart; but, judging by their heads, one of these creatures was a huge snake, the second a fierce lion, and the third an ugly goat. The lion and the goat were asleep; the snake was broad awake, and kept staring around him with a great pair of fiery eyes. But—and this was the most wonderful part of the matter—the three spires of smoke evidently issued from the nostrils of these three heads! So strange was the spectacle that, though Bellerophon had been all along expecting it, the truth did not immediately occur to him that here was the terrible three-headed Chimæra. He had found out the Chimæra's cavern. The snake, the lion, and the goat, as he supposed them to be, were not three separate creatures, but one monster!

7. The wicked, hateful thing! Slumbering as two thirds of it were, it still held, in its abominable claws, the remnant of an unfortunate lamb—or possibly (but I hate to think so) it was a dear little boy—which its three mouths had been gnawing, before two of them fell asleep!

8. All at once Bellerophon started as from a dream, and knew it to be the Chimæra. Pegasus seemed to know it, at the same instant, and sent forth a neigh that sounded like the call of a trumpet to battle. At this sound the three heads reared themselves erect and belched out great flashes of flame. Before Bellerophon had time to consider what to do next, the monster flung itself out of the cavern and sprang straight toward him, with its immense claws extended, and its snaky tail twisting itself venomously behind. If Pegasus had not been as nimble as a bird, both he and his rider would have been overthrown by the Chimæra's headlong rush, and thus the battle have been ended before it was well begun. But the winged horse was not to be caught so. In the twinkling of an eye he was up aloft, half-way to the clouds, snorting with anger. He shuddered, too, not with affright, but with utter disgust at the loathsomeness of this poisonous thing with three heads.

[Jack London wrote the following article for the *Critic* \* of August, 1903.]

### Stranger Than Fiction

[An experience solemnly affirmed to be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.]

1. I remember frying bacon at a noon halt on the Klondike Trail, some several years back, while I listened incredulously to a Yukon pioneer's tale of woe. There were tears in his voice and a querulous

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\* Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London.

plaint, as he told me of all he had suffered from the mosquitos. Before his recital reached a close he became angry at the little winged pests; the injuries they had done him waxed colossal, and he cursed them in terms the most uncompromisingly blasphemous I ever heard.

2. He was a strong man. He had been seven years in the land. I knew, at that very moment, that he was resting from a tramp of fifty miles which he had covered in the last fifteen hours, and that he intended to cover twenty-five miles more before night came on.

3. As I say, I knew all this. The man was real. He had done things. He had a reputation. Yet I said to myself: *These mosquito-happenings are impossible things. They cannot be true. The man lies.*

4. Four months later two comrades and I, three strong men of us, went down the Yukon two thousand miles in an open boat. Tears came into our voices and remained there, likewise the querulous plaint. We grew irritable and quarrelsome. Instead of talking like men we whined broken-spiritedly, and said that of mosquitos the half had not been told. And I, for one, marveled at the restraint and control of the man who had first told me of the mosquito at the noon halt on the Klondike Trail.

5. Since then, in civilization, I have attempted to tell the story of the mosquito. My friends have listened pityingly, or looked bored, or told me plainly that veracity was evidently not a Klondike product. These things I endured, striving to redeem myself with greater earnestness and detail; but, finally, when one fellow said, "That reminds me of a real mosquito story," I dropped the subject for good and all. Since then I have been most exemplary in my conduct and morals, and I still hope that before I totter into the grave I shall succeed in living down my reputation for untruthfulness.

6. I do not dare to tell the story of the mosquito here. I have merely hinted at it in this somewhat lengthy preamble in order to show that I understand and forgive the editorial mind when certain facts of mine, in fictional garb, are promptly returned to me. For be it known that truth is so much stranger than fiction that it is unreal to editors and readers.

7. For instance, I knew a girl. Our first meeting was typical. It was up in the rugged Sierras. In the cool of the day she came out of the dark pine woods, in short-skirted costume, her hair down her back, a shotgun across the hollow of her arm. She was hunting rabbits—for her, deer and a Winchester rifle would have been just as likely. She was quite unconventional. She could ride a horse better than the average broncho-buster. She could go down in a diving-bell, scratch off a magazine article (which would sell), or do a Highland fling on the

vaudeville stage, for the fun of the thing. On the other hand, she had opened the books. I have at hand now a score of dainty poems by her. She was as close to culture as she was to the wild, free life of the open or of Bohemia. In few words, she was a striking creature.

8. I toned her down and made a heroine of her. It was for the sake of veracity, and because I remembered the story of the mosquito, that I toned her down. I took away from her realness, diminished the living fact of her, in order that the reader might believe she was real and a living fact. The reviewers swiftly proved to me how signally I had failed. I quote at random: "One cannot believe in her, but one likes her and forgives her culture"; "a projection of the writer's ideal woman upon paper"; "a monster"; "a thing contrary to nature"; "remains at the end of the story utterly incredible and even inconceivable."

9. From time to time I have written short adventure-stories for a famous juvenile publication. My experience with these stories was practically uniform. Whenever I evolved out of my sheer inner consciousness some boyish adventure, it received the most flattering approval of the editors. Whenever my inner consciousness was not in working order, and I fell back on the facts of my life, wrote adventures I had actually gone through, things I had done with my own hands and head, the editors hummed and hawed. "It is not real," they said. "It is impossible. It could not have happened thus and so."

10. Once, when they commented in this fashion upon a cliff-climbing story of mine, a literal narrative of a thing I had done, as had thousands of others as well, I flew into rebellion. "I can readily comprehend," I wrote them—though I really didn't at the moment, so befuddled was my reason by my wrath—"I can readily comprehend that the state of consciousness you may achieve on the flat floor of your editorial sanctum concerning a man plastered against the frown of a cliff is a far different state of consciousness from that a man may achieve who is plastered against the frown of a cliff." They were very nice about it, taking my criticism in better part than I took theirs; and, for that matter, they could afford to, for they were in the right. It is incontrovertible that one cannot do on the printed page what one does in life.

11. I once wrote a story of a tramp. I intended it to be the first of a series of tramp stories, all of which were to relate the adventures of a single tramp character. I was well fitted to write this series, and for two reasons. First, I had myself tramped ten thousand miles or so through the United States and Canada, begged for my food from

door to door, and performed sentences for vagrancy in various jails. Second, my tramp character was a personal friend. Many a time he had shoved his legs under my table or turned into my bed with me. I knew him better than I did my brother. He was a remarkable man, college-educated, qualified to practice law in all the courts, spilling over with the minutest details of every world-philosophy from Zeno to Nietzsche, deeply versed in political economy and sociology, a brilliant lecturer—in short, a genius of extraordinary caliber.

12. To exploit in fiction this living fact, I not only toned him down, but actually used an experience of his for the *motif* of the first story. I make bold to say that it is one of the best stories I ever wrote, if it is not the best. When nobody is around I often sneak it out from the bottom of the box and read it with huge delight, hugging myself the while and feeling great sorrow for the world which is denied my joy.

13. I need hardly say that this story, to the editorial mind, was an unveracious thing. One editor, only, did it convince. And this is how it was. I knew a young writer in Southern California who tramped East for the experience. I shall call him Jones. Well, Jones met this particular editor in New York City and told him divers of his own tramp experiences. Shortly afterward my tramp story was submitted to this editor. In this fashion he explained his rejection of it: "Had I not known Mr. Jones for some time past, I should have said such a creation as your Tramp was absolutely and utterly impossible, and my reason for rejecting the MS is that to other people who have not had the opportunity to really understand what a tramp may be, whence he may come, and into what he may be transformed, it might seem too great a tax upon credulity."

14. Tone down as I would, my Tramp was too real to be true. With the help of Mr. Jones he had convinced but one editor, who, in turn, said very truly that his readers, not having the advantage of Mr. Jones's acquaintance, would remain unconvinced. Suffice it to say, beyond the initial story, the series remains unwritten, and the world little recks of what it has lost.

15. I had a certain pastoral experience. The effect was cumulative. I had dealings with several hundred different people of all ages, sizes, and sexes, through a long period of time, so that the human traits and psychology involved were not human traits and psychology. I sat down and brooded over this pastoral experience. Alas! said I to myself, it would make a bully story, but it is too real to be true.

16. I should have abandoned it altogether had not a new method of treating it come to me. I pulled up to my desk and started in. First I

wrote the title. Underneath the title, in brackets, I wrote, "A True Narrative." Then I wrote the experience as it actually happened, using only the naked facts of it, bringing in for verities, and precisely labeled, my wife, my sister, my nephew, my maid-servant, myself, my house, and my post-office address.

17. Ah, ha! chortled I, as I mailed it East; at last I have circumvented the editorial mind. But it came back. It continued to come back. The editors refused it with phrases complimentary and otherwise, and one and all thanked me for having allowed them the privilege of considering my *story*[!].

18. At last an editor looked kindly upon it, accepting it with qualifications. He wrote: "It is decidedly good . . . but I shy at the use of the —. With the ordinary reader this would be considered carrying the matter too far, but I can believe it was necessary in reality." And after indicating the changes he would suggest, he wound up with: "For the *story* (!) I will then pay \$—."

19. Oscar Wilde once proved with fair conclusiveness that Nature imitates Art. I have been forced to conclude that Fact, to be true, must imitate Fiction. The creative imagination is more veracious than the voice of life. Actual events are less true than logical conceits and whimsicalities. And the man who writes fiction had better leave fact alone.

20. I said to myself that the mosquito-man lied. By innumerable editorial rejections I have been informed that I have lied. And for all that I placed at the head of this narrative, in brackets, a solemn affirmation of its truthfulness, I am confident that it will be believed by no one. It is too real to be true.

## II. CORRECTING POOR WORK

As you read the themes that follow, jot down each paragraph topic. Then for each paragraph after the first make a sentence (or recast the sentence used by the writer) that would make a good transition. You cannot do the exercise properly by merely supplying a "this" or by repeating some words. It is not an exercise in "putting in words," but in making sentences that refer to topics. The paragraph might not in every case be improved by the addition of your transition sentence, because noticeable and formal linking may easily be overdone. (See Chapter X, section 1; see page 220.) This is not altogether

an exercise in improving themes, but is practice work in making transitions. When a student is trained in the duty of "taking the reader with him," he need not use so much obvious and mechanical linking.

### It Pays to Advertise

1. Advertising is one of the best ways to promote your business. Many firms have failed because of the lack of advertising. They have been as good as the next firm, but the public didn't know about it. Therefore they didn't have many customers, which resulted in their ultimate failure.

2. Street-car advertising is one of the best ways to advertise. As the tired working man or business man slouches down in his seat in the street-car, he casually glances around for something interesting. Often he has nothing to do, so he reads all the advertisements on the other side of the car. However, in advertising as well as in anything else there is the good and the bad. There are some that catch the eye, and some that don't; of those that do there are some that interest, and some that don't.

3. Good advertising is an art. One of the best advertisements is that of a certain flour. In the center is a large bag of flour, while on the left is the word *eventually*, and on the right are the words *why not now?* It is plain and simple, but it carries the meaning home. There is not a long harangue about its good qualities, as there is on many advertisements. It simply says "try me." There is something about that advertisement that pleases the mind. Another good one is the one which advertises some tires. It has a picture of a little child in his pajamas; this naturally interests any mother or father immediately. The child has a candle in his hand, being just about to go to bed, while encircling the child is a tire. Underneath is written the motto *it is time to retire*.

4. However, a poor advertisement is almost worse than none. For instance an advertisement that practically tells you that you are a fool if you don't buy this shirt, that suit, or this tie is worthless. You are immediately set against that firm. It goes against the grain. But all the firms are now waking up to the importance of good advertising, so the poor kind is rapidly disappearing.

### The Moon's Story

1. I, O earth-born people, should be of great interest to you, for not only am I your only satellite, but I was once a part of your own

earth. Millions of years ago your earth and I were one mass of fire, but, as we cooled, I broke off, and being the smaller, cooled more quickly. Now, when the sun has deserted one side of you, I act as a mirror to bring it back.

2. When you look at me, you never think of my being, at times, over two hundred and fifty thousand miles from you. But I am, although at times I came as close as two hundred and twenty-one thousand miles. I also look as big as the sun to you. In reality, the sun is more than four thousand times as large as I am. And I am gradually getting smaller, with the result that great cracks are appearing on my "face." My surface is one-thirteenth of that of your earth.

3. Should one of your number be able to come here with me, he would indeed find it a peculiar place in comparison with his own land. Let us say that on earth he weighs seventy pounds; when he walks on my surface, even with his oxygen tank which he must needs carry to enable him to breathe—for sad to say there is no atmosphere around me—he will weigh only thirty pounds. Where on earth he could, with a great effort, jump five feet into the air, he could now bound upwards twenty or more feet without the least effort. This would be of great assistance to him in climbing the numerous mountains, some of which rise to the height of twenty-four thousand feet, and in clambering through the great craters, which are as pock-marks on my "face." There would be one condition that would be very bad for him to endure—namely, the great extremes of heat and cold. For this reason I am afraid he would not long remain with me.

4. But now the night is coming to an end. Tomorrow you will probably have forgotten me; but I—I will always be here, until the sun itself has been consumed.

### Aunt Carrie

1. Aunt Carrie is a typical fat old negro "mammy." Whenever I go back home into the big blue-and-white kitchen of that house down South, Aunt Carrie looks up with a broad grin, throws her arms up over her head and invariably says, "Wal, bless my bones if heah ain't Miss Zannie done come back home! I's mighty glad to see ye again, honey; thought ye nevah was a-comin' home again." Then she laughs. If you've never heard Aunt Carrie laugh, you cannot imagine what it is like. She chuckles first; then bit by bit she laughs, louder and harder, until all of her two hundred and fifty fairly quiver with the joy of it.

2. Aunt Carrie always wears blue, checked gingham dresses, as stiff as starch can make them, a blue gingham apron, and a red bandanna handkerchief tied around her head. Nobody in this world has such



black skin or such white teeth or such big eyes as Aunt Carrie. When she talks, she rolls her eyes so much that we all tease her about being a flirt when she was young.

3. There is not any memory as vivid as that of Aunt Carrie, standing by the big range, cooking waffles. When you've eaten them, she always asks you if you like them, and then helps you praise them. "Yes, suh, yo' Aunt Carrie ain't much good fo' nothin' else any mo', but, honey chile, I sho' can cook waffles fo' you."

[The fourth theme is a clear and thoughtful analysis in a mature style; the author has presented each of Miss Matty's traits in a paragraph; perhaps she chose not to link her separate bits of analysis. But it is usually poor judgment to present a reader with six detached fragments, and it will be good training to invent the ways of linking each paragraph with what has just been said.]

### Miss Matty

1. When we think of Miss Matty in *Cranford*, the first thing that comes into our minds is how lovable she was. Her kindness was so great as to overcome many little foibles which are usually characteristic of an old English country lady and soften those which she indulged, so that people hardly ever laughed at them.

2. Miss Matty was an odd little woman. The combination of broad-mindedness and narrow-mindedness in her was very unusual.

3. Of course we should expect an Englishwoman, the daughter of a strict father, and one who had been brought up in a narrow circle, to be conservative. For instance, we are not surprised at her pride in her family, her over-careful thrift in the matter of burning only one candle at a time, and, when we first meet her, her rather lofty attitude toward servants. Her great reverence for the dead and their former opinions elicit no surprise. But what does strike us as unusual is her brave overcoming of convention when she feels it her duty to do so.

4. Miss Matty's sympathetic nature often overrides her determination to do only what her beloved sister thought absolutely proper. Even though perhaps sister Deborah would have thought it shocking to allow Martha to have her "followers" call on her in the kitchen, the thought of her own sad love-affair makes the kind mistress relent and let her maid see James.

5. Only singular breadth of mind and kindness of mind could sometimes have made Miss Matty put aside her passionate reverence and re-

gard for the principles of Deborah. Yet such a proceeding occurred very rarely.

6. Could anyone be more loyal than Miss Matilda? Her wish that no one should abbreviate her name shows it. Besides her feeling toward her sister, her attitude toward her lost brother manifests this trait. Despite her doubts as to how nearly right Peter was in leaving home as he did, and despite the fact that perhaps he went morally astray, her loving loyalty makes her ready at any moment to forgive him and receive him as before.

7. All her traits, including all her little oddities and conservative ideas about religion and morals, resolve themselves into two things: her absolute uprightness, and her sweet and generous kindness and love for every class of person.

## CHAPTER IX

### ONE TOPIC IN EACH PARAGRAPH

#### A. THE TOPIC SENTENCE

The first sentence of the following paragraph announces the topic—the effect produced in Petrograd by the “glad tidings” of the fall of the Bastille in Paris, 1789; the other three sentences supply the details of this effect—“cries of gladness,” “this rapture,” “the enthusiasm.”

To Russia the good tidings came like the bright flame of a bonfire on some day of public rejoicing. In the proud city of Peter and of Catherine nobles and serfs, with tears and cries of gladness, embraced one another on the public squares. The French Ambassador at the Court of the Empress bears witness to this rapture. “It is impossible,” he writes, “to describe the enthusiasm excited among tradesmen, merchants, citizens, and the young men of the upper classes by this fall of a State prison, and this first triumph of tempestuous liberty—French, Russians, Danes, Germans, Dutchmen were all congratulating and embracing one another in the streets as if they had been liberated from some onerous bondage.”

Anatole France, translated by Winifred Stevens in the *Critic*

This is the most common type of paragraph in descriptive or expository writing. It is the form most useful as a general model for students: “Let yourself know what your paragraph is about; let your reader see at the outset what it is about; stick to the one topic that has been announced.”

Here is another paragraph of the same sort. The writer, in a description of a Nevada mining town, has told of how “pneumonia was the scourge that carried off the miners” and of how the dead were buried without ceremony. Then he turns to an anecdote.

Goldfield has two cemeteries. One of these contains about two hundred graves and is located almost in the heart of the town. Like almost everything else in the place, it just "grew there." It got its start in a curious way. The first man who died in Goldfield came to his end as many do in a mining camp—suddenly. He had no friends, and a committee appointed itself to bury him. They chose a spot some distance from the town and gave \$5 to an unemployed man to dig the grave. But they paid him too soon. He employed the \$5 for the purpose of internal irrigation. Then, being too weary to walk to the spot selected, he dug the grave right where he happened to be when languor overtook him.

A. E. Thomas in *Putnam's Monthly*

If an unwary student were asked what the one topic of the preceding paragraph is, he might reply, "The two cemeteries," because that is the subject put forward in the first sentence. But that is not the topic. The paragraph is an answer to the question, "Why is *one* of these two cemeteries in the heart of the town?" The first sentence of a paragraph may be used for getting away from the previous topic, or for introducing one part of another topic. There is no law requiring that the topic must be displayed in the first sentence. Such a rule would make compositions mechanical and monotonous.

What is the topic of this next paragraph, and where is it first mentioned?

A more important occurrence was the King's visit to Oxford. Miss Burney went in the royal train to Nuneham, was utterly neglected there in the crowd, and could with difficulty find a servant to show the way to her bedroom, or a hairdresser to arrange her curls. She had the honor of entering Oxford in the last of a long string of carriages which formed the royal procession, of walking after the Queen all day through refectories and chapels, and of standing, half dead with fatigue and hunger, while her august mistress was seated at an excellent cold collation. At Magdalene College Frances was left for a moment in a parlor, where she sank down on a chair. A good-natured equerry saw that she was exhausted, and shared with her some apricots and bread, which he had wisely put into his pockets. At that moment the door opened; the Queen entered; the wearied attendants sprang up; the bread and fruit were hastily concealed. "I found," says poor Miss Burney, "that

our appetites were to be supposed annihilated, at the same moment that our strength was to be invincible."

Macaulay is describing the life of Frances Burney while she was a lady-in-waiting to the wife of King George III; in the previous paragraph he has told of the pettiness of the life of Frances in the royal household; and he wishes to give next an illustration of how she was abused. He starts his narrative by speaking of "a more important occurrence" than the one he has just told about; his second sentence shows how Frances was "utterly neglected" during the visit to Oxford; the third sentence tells of her having to walk and stand all day while she was "half dead with fatigue and hunger." That is the topic. When we reach the end, we have one idea impressed upon us: the fatigue and hunger that Frances had to endure.

What one idea is brought out in the following paragraph, and where is that idea announced to the reader?

(1) There is no doubt that Germany produced better optical glass before the war than did Great Britain, France, or America, from which it is reasonable to infer that her ships were provided with better range-finding instruments. (2) The Germans are also known to have given great attention to the eyesight of the men selected to train for range-takers. (3) Only men passing elaborately devised visual tests were selected in the first place, and these were put through special training calculated to develop their natural sight to the utmost. (4) This was a sound and sensible thing to do, and there is no doubt that the Germans reaped some advantage from it.

Lt. L. R. Freeman, in the *Saturday Evening Post*

The whole paragraph is not about "range-finding instruments," for they are not referred to after the first sentence. The second sentence is about selecting men of superior eyesight; the third sentence refers to this selection and tells about the "special training" of these men. The last sentence says that from this sensible policy the Germans *reaped some advantage*—and that is the main topic. The author's method is to present one item of naval method, then a second, then a third; and to bind these together as one subject in the last words of his paragraph.

In each of the four paragraphs that we have examined thus far in the chapter there is a sentence which indicates the topic, either by pointing it out at the beginning or by revealing it midway or by summing it up at the end. This is called the "topic sentence." It is a common device and a useful one. It is often taught by prolonged exercises with topic sentences—such as developing paragraphs from given sentences, finding the topic sentences in books, or underlining the sentences in themes written by the students. Such drill is often profitable. A person who has been trained to find and to construct topic sentences is much more likely to write unified divisions of his compositions.

#### B. UNITY WITHOUT A TOPIC SENTENCE

But that kind of work may give a wrong idea, and so may do harm. It may train a student to think that in each one of his paragraphs there ought to be a little monument bearing the inscription, "This is what I am talking about." Such topic sentences are often stony lumps of foreign material, betraying the clumsiness of the writer and wearisome to the reader. A true topic sentence is not a sign-post; it is a living part of a live structure, doing its own work in carrying on the progress of the whole. Professional speakers and writers seldom give any thought to setting up a topic sentence by which to steer themselves through a tangle of ideas; they survey those ideas, decide upon the course through them, and present them *one at a time* in paragraphs. They are always thinking, "What is my one topic?" The chances are that if they are describing or explaining, their instinct for unity will produce one sentence which reveals the whole topic; but often the idea stands out quite clearly without being proclaimed at any one point. In narrative there is much less likelihood of their using a topic sentence. It really is a case of "likelihood" or "chances," for they have no such purpose as constructing a special statement to advertise unity. One of the sentences may happen to summarize the topic, or it may happen that no sentence is of that kind.

How does a reader learn the topic of the following paragraph from *Gulliver's Travels*?

The last of these voyages not proving very fortunate, I grew weary of the sea, and intended to stay at home with my wife and family. I removed from the Old Jewry to Fetter Lane, and from thence to Wapping, hoping to get business among the sailors; but it would not turn to account. After three years' expectation that things would mend I accepted an advantageous offer from Captain William Prichard, master of the *Antelope*, who was making a voyage to the South Sea. We set sail from Bristol May 4, 1699, and our voyage at first was very prosperous.

It could be argued that this is nothing but a string of detached statements: why I wished to stay at home, what I did during three years at home, why I accepted an offer for another voyage, how it started prosperously. Yet in the first chapter of the book it is one distinct episode, impressing the reader with one important idea: "Gulliver was by nature a steady, home-staying body." There is one well-defined topic: "Though I wished to stay at home, I had to sail again." When the paragraph is read in its proper setting among the other paragraphs, this one idea is evident; indeed it stands out more impressively because there is *not* a topic sentence, since it sounds more like the natural flow of a plain man's account of his doings and the reasons for them.

An interesting book could be written to discuss cases like this one of Swift's subtle skill—questions of using or not using a topic sentence. But we are speaking about another matter—the one topic. A good paragraph is always a unit, and its meaning can always be summed up in one sentence; yet there is no need of including such a summary. The need is one topic that *can be* summarized. With reference to that one topic every sentence should be constructed. Every statement is a part of the whole and should be written or spoken with a view to making it do its share of the work. This is true to such an extent that in some paragraphs every sentence might be called a topic sentence.

When I was at Santa Gertrudis, I slept by the mission and was awakened early in the morning by an ancient Cochimi who was crooning over her beads before the mission altar. Later, as she sat on the steps, enjoying a cigarette and sunning her frail body, she told me that she was over a hundred years old. Had she said one hundred and fifty, I should not have been skeptical, for she seemed well along in the mummy class. Crouched on the worn stone steps, she seemed the very epitome of the mission system: a poor, faithful old dame, the sole worshiper in the wilderness, dreaming of the lost Padres, for whose return a half century of prayers had been vain, and peopling, doubtless, the deserted plaza with the figures of those now resting in the deserted graves hard by.

A. W. North, *Camp and Camino in Lower California*

Each sentence contains the idea that the Indian woman is very old; each puts before us its own contribution to that one topic, her extreme age. The paragraph does not succeed by using any little device of repeating or announcing, but by following the one guiding principle, "Make each sentence, in its proper order, help to develop the one idea." Mr. North (1) introduces an "ancient" woman, (2) who says she is a hundred years old, (3) who looks almost as old as a mummy, (4) whose life is merely a dream of those long since dead. Good paragraphs cannot be made by any such device as using a topic sentence, or four topic sentences, or no topic sentence, or repeating synonyms; they can be made only by arranging a series of statements in such a sequence that the one topic stands out.

What the topic is may depend a great deal on the setting in the whole composition, as we have seen in the passage from *Gulliver's Travels*. For an ordinary paragraph is only one part of a whole; its effect may depend on its surroundings. Try the experiment of finding the topic in the following paragraph when it is thus separated from its context.

When the sea is rather agitated, and the fishermen are coming home in their boat, it is wonderful to see how they manage to cross the reef. One of the men stands upright in the bow of the boat, and the others watch him, sitting with the oars in their hands. Outside the reef it appears as if the boat were not approaching the land, but going back



to sea. At last the man standing up in the boat gives them the signal that the great wave is coming which is to lift them over the reef. A moment, and then the boat is raised so high in the air that her keel may be seen from the shore; and at the next she is entirely hidden from the eye; neither mast nor keel nor men can be seen; it is as if they had been devoured by the sea. But presently they emerge from the deep, like a great sea animal sporting with the waves, and the oars move as if they were the creature's legs. The second and the third reef are passed in the same manner, and then the fishermen jump into the water, and the boat is pushed forward on the heaving waves, till it is at length drawn up on shore, beyond the reach of the breakers. A wrong order given by the man in the bow in front of the reef, the slightest hesitation, and the boat would be lost. "Then it would be all over with me and Martin too." This thought passed through the mind of Jurgen one day, when they were out at sea in the same boat together. His foster-father was on board, but he was taken suddenly ill when only a few oars' stroke from the reef, and Jurgen sprang from his seat to take his father's place in the bow.

That seems like two topics—like a long description plus an illustration. In Andersen's *Story from the Sand-hills*, however, the effect is far different. The reader has been for many pages interested in the moody and passionate boy Jurgen, who loves Elsie, and who has been told by her that she loves his rival Martin; the reader's interest is all centered on this deadly rivalry. Then very abruptly the author begins, "When the sea is rather agitated." A reader knows that the long description of landing a boat through the waves is all preparatory to another episode in the quarrel between the two young men; the one topic leaps suddenly into prominence against the descriptive background at the words, "Then it would be all over with me and Martin too." The paragraph is all about "Jurgen's temptation." Though a student seldom (perhaps never) ought to write a paragraph 300 words long, he can profit by this method of showing a reader one unmistakable topic. He can imitate the method in a paragraph only one-third as long.

The next illustration is also far too long and complicated to serve as a model for school use, yet its structure, its method of enforcing one idea, will be a helpful example in making shorter

paragraphs of argument or explanation. The author could have massed together all that he has to say about the American policy, and then have shown how Japan has really followed a very different policy; but he preferred not to build two separate blocks of that sort. Instead, he puts in at two points (sentences 3-5 and 7) the contrast of our American ideals with the actions of Japan. Read slowly and attentively to find the one topic.

(1) The representatives of the Japanese government have apparently deliberately employed the expression "Monroe Doctrine" to explain what they mean by their desired dominant position in the Far East. (2) The expression is misleading. (3) The United States in its Monroe Doctrine has protected the American continent from the military and political aggressions of European powers. (4) It has not itself followed a policy of military or political aggression for its own selfish purposes. (5) Therein it differs from Japan. (6) The Japanese government, on the practically universal testimony of American and British business men attempting to do business in the Far East, has deliberately, repeatedly, and continuously violated the principles of the Open Door in Manchuria and everywhere in China where she can exert an influence. (7) The United States has made no efforts to follow anything but a really truthful Open-Door policy anywhere on the western continent outside of its own territories. (8) The use of the expression, "Monroe Doctrine," by the Japanese as descriptive of its policies in the Far East is distinctly untruthful, and all American citizens ought to keep that fact in mind. (9) Likewise it should not be forgotten that it is reported that, under an agreement by which the various nations interested were to send a joint expedition into Siberia with a maximum number of 7000 troops for each nation, the Japanese sent, contrary to the agreement, some 70,000 troops, and only withdrew part of them after vigorous protest by the American government, leaving, however, far more troops than the number agreed upon. (10) Moreover, the testimony of American observers in Siberia is that Japan's handling of her troops has been most aggressive and really hostile to the unselfish purposes of the expedition.

J. W. Jenks, in *Current Opinion*

A person who has been trained always to expect a topic sentence at the beginning will be misled at the outset of Dr. Jenks's paragraph, for the passage is not about either the Monroe Doctrine or Japan's "dominant position"; nor is it about the high

ideals of the United States. It progresses steadily toward one conclusion by these steps: (1-2) Japan is deceiving us by using the term "Monroe Doctrine"; (3-4) that name has never covered aggression; but (5-6) Japan has aggressively violated the Open-Door agreement, (7) unlike the United States; and (8) is untruthful and (9) has forced her army forward and (10) has used her troops aggressively. Dr. Jenks has so marshaled his thoughts that each one helps to set forth the one topic of "Japan's aggressive policy."

### C. PARAGRAPHS THAT LACK UNITY

When we see that kind of skilful work done by a practiced hand, it appears easy. If we watch a cabinet-maker, we get the impression that a saw and a hammer will naturally fit pieces of hard wood neatly together; if we watch a professional game of baseball, we are apt to take it for granted that willing muscles can always throw accurately to first. Not until we have tried to make a piece of furniture or to play short-stop do we realize the difficulty of these undertakings. It is so with paragraphs. The finished work that we see in well-written books appears to be a matter of course. Why shouldn't four or five sentences follow each other in a workmanlike sequence to convey one topic to a reader? Then we examine a dozen school compositions. Here are short paragraphs that contain two topics, long paragraphs that have no discernible topic, paragraphs that waver and gyrate away from their topics. For example, try to name the topic of the following paragraph written by a tenth-grade student who shows good sense and some unusual knowledge in each sentence, but whose combination of eight sentences sets our brains whirling.

(1) Lastly we have the evolution of the human brain. (2) In prehistoric times the big question in life was how to get food and keep from being killed. (3) Naturally the men with the larger brains survived, and those who were dull either starved or were eaten. (4) The result in the end was the survival of the fittest. (5) Through countless generations this process of elimination went on until the result has been

the brain of the present-day man. (6) Now no one thinks of protecting himself from wild beasts, and the getting of food is comparatively easy. (7) The brain, no longer having to bother with these all-important questions, has turned to such topics as perpetual motion, irresistible forces and immovable bodies, the fourth dimension, etc. (8) With all its training, however, the average human mind is only the barbarian once removed; we still retain our belief in things told to us, as the savage believed the idol to be his God, and so we will probably go on till the end of the earth.

The paragraph is not so helter-skelter as it appears. The first five sentences describe in a fairly orderly way the evolution of the human mind, and the sixth and seventh tell of the occupations of the highly developed mind. The outstanding fault is that the last sentence swings back to "however, the brain is not much developed," and swings away to the new topic of "belief in things that are told us." Thus we are shot off at a tangent. The course of thought is like this: (1) hard necessity developed our brains; (2) but now we are free to play with subjects like the fourth dimension; (3) but our brains have not really developed much, and never will develop.

Does it seem likely that evolution was too hard for the young writer, so that he was overcome by the difficulty of his subject? Probably that was not the case. For the simplest subject, completely understood by an amateur writer, is quite as likely to be twisted into a hard knot. Here is the opening paragraph of a theme on a most matter-of-fact topic, written by a highly intelligent student.

(1) There are many difficulties that confront an amateur butterfly-collector, for collecting butterflies does not merely consist in catching the insect—in fact, this is one of the easiest features. (2) When a specimen is caught it must be spread on a spreading-board, then dried, and placed in a cabinet; or, if it is not at the collector's convenience to spread it at once, it can be stored away in an insect-proof place, relaxed at leisure, and then spread. (3) Either of these processes calls for several appliances, which the amateur collector (who usually has very slender means at his disposal) will find it much more profitable and equally practical to construct himself. (4) The most important of

these, at the very beginning of a future entomologist's career, is a practical, substantial, and good-looking cabinet to keep the mounted specimens in for reference or exhibition.

Those four sentences are neatly linked together: we seem to move right on from (1) catching butterflies to (2) drying them by (3) using several appliances, the most important of which is (4) a good-looking cabinet. Yet we see, if we read carefully, that the thought is quite disorderly; the series of ideas is: (1) *The difficulties of collecting*; (2) *spread a specimen whenever convenient*; (3) *the tools may be made by the collector himself*; (4) *the most important spreading-tool is a cabinet in which to exhibit*. This is not a paragraph, but a mass of possibilities; There is no topic.

A student with the ability to write such mature sentences *could* have developed one definite topic in his paragraph. He made no effort. He rambled on with excellent diction, a kind of time order, and an interest in his materials—but heedless of *the one topic*.

In each paragraph that you speak or write try to put your thoughts in such an order that one topic will be developed for an audience; try to lead up to such a conclusion as will make a listener feel that in this division of the composition he has heard about some one topic.

### EXERCISES

Write a concise criticism of each of the following paragraphs, stating what one topic it deals with, or how it fails to deal with any particular topic. These paragraphs are of great variety: one of the poor ones was written by a professional, and some of the good ones were written by amateurs in the tenth and eleventh grades. A few of them are somewhat debatable—for example, you may find that the one idea is there, but that it is not well emphasized; or the only fault may be that an illustration is given at too great length. Don't be too fierce in judging;

don't set out with a determination to pick every possible little flaw. Remember that a good critic is sympathetic and makes an effort to follow an author's unexpected devices. Put yourself in the author's place and decide whether he has kept reasonably well to one topic or has decidedly switched away from his topic. An example of "a concise criticism" of the first paragraph of the Exercises would be: The first sentence raises a question, and the third sentence answers it. But the second sentence brings up an entirely different topic: "The question would *not* arise if the other fellow had *not* lied."

1. It is a question for strong debate whether a boy should support his comrade by lying to help him out of a scrape. I don't believe that questions of this sort would arise nearly so often if the fellow who was asked about his malicious deeds would always tell the truth. In this school a fellow is never asked or expected to tell on another fellow, but if one fellow lies to get out of trouble, that is no reason why the other fellow is expected to lie also.

2. Shenstone's home-life in boyhood was the chief influence in shaping his character and molding his ideals. It was a quiet home—a home of books and music, gently ruled by a mother of tranquil fortitude and simple, unquestioning piety. The boy inherited much of her nature. He disliked loud noises, and there is a family tradition that once during a thunderstorm he begged the maid to put cotton in his ears. When questioned, however, he indignantly denied having done so.

3. Then it was that he became a ragman, a poor peddler of the streets, hoping that some day soon he would find his little girl. Day in and day out he pushed about his cart. For the most part he frequented the wealthy residence district, where he thought he would eventually find his Rosa. At night he slept in a cellar. The little food that he got each day sustained him, but he was very haggard. Always he kept alive in his heart the hope of finding his daughter. It was the only thing that drove him on day by day.

4. Coal is one of the most important elements that man knows. It was discovered some two hundred years ago and has been in use from then on constantly. There are two great varieties of coal—soft and hard. The soft variety is less pure, as it does not contain so much pure carbon as the hard, and consequently is not the most desirable for ordinary fuel purposes. The soft coal, however, is used in this distillation that I will try to explain.

5. But as his plantation thrived, Hadley began to lose his former

enthusiasm, and his many friends often noticed him, sitting on a rude bench in front of his house, lost in thought. This became a regular habit with him, and his friends, seeking the reason of his melancholy fits, met with cold receptions. Rumors began to float about Jamestown that Hadley was homesick, and some few even went so far as to say that he had been disappointed in love. Now these few were nearer right than they suspected; for Hadley had loved a girl in Devonshire long before he cast his fortune in Virginia. And the girl loved him—but Hadley was a Protestant, and her father was a Catholic. And there the matter ended. Hadley had tried to drown his love in the busy life of a colonist, but now, as he had more time and leisure, his mind naturally turned back to the days when he had wooed pretty Elizabeth Seymore.

6. During the summer months it is very often the case that the young man finds many hours that he doesn't know what to do with. This time, it appears to me, could be very well employed for the purpose of building a set of furniture. At any rate, I found it so during my last vacation. In going about this task there were many difficulties to surmount: first, there was the kind of wood to be used; second, there was the design that had to be decided upon; third, there was the actual building and finishing of the piece.

7. Few men have been so fully successful and useful in varied fields of public work. He was an overseer and a fellow at Harvard, where he was graduated in the class with Theodore Roosevelt, whose friendship for him continued strong and fine for thirty-eight years thereafter. As a banker and financier he took part in many great economic undertakings, such as the organization of the United States Steel Corporation. As diplomat his career culminated when President Taft in 1909 sent him as Ambassador to France after he had been Assistant Secretary of State and, for a brief time, Secretary of State. Always he was a force in whatever field he worked, a courteous and considerate gentleman in manner, vigorous and persistent in action, invariably clear-headed and unfaltering in his devotion to the interests of his country.

8. Cedric the Saxon, while by no means the hero of *Ivanhoe*, stands out as one of the most interesting characters in the book. His character is brought out most clearly the first time we see him, sitting at the end of the long table impatiently waiting for his supper and for the return of his ward Rowena. There he sits, big, broad-shouldered, hearty Saxon that he is. We can imagine him hunched forward a bit, his chin in his hand and his brows knotted with impatience and vexation. Around him sit his numerous dogs, thoroughly aware of their master's mood from the scant attention they receive, so different

from the ordinary pettings and kind words. Outside, the weather is anything but pleasant. It has begun to pour, and Cedric is worried about Rowena, whom he loves as dearly as he would a daughter, who has gone to a neighboring church and has not yet returned. And, by no means least among his troubles, Cedric is hungry. Like many another man, he does not see why he should be kept waiting once he is ready for his supper, and his impatience increases momentarily. But for all that Cedric is a kind-hearted, just old man, one of the Saxon nobles who had held sway over England in the days when it was nothing but a wilderness, and who resents with all his being the presence of the proud, overbearing, greedy Norman lords who so scorned the simple, rugged Saxons.

9. This lecture impressed me greatly because it pictured vividly the barbarism of submarine warfare, but still left room for imagination and thought concerning the possibilities of a world peace. Many of the fellows felt the same as I did about this, and all were interested in the lecture. This was an extremely good lecture, but other lectures when properly delivered often have a wonderful spiritual and educational value. It seems to me that all lectures on books, science, religion, authors, current events, politics, and all classics are interesting when delivered by a person who is well adapted to his work.

10. At first the town is almost hidden by the thick, yellowish smoke that shields it. Gradually one is able to see the smokestacks and the long buildings from which the smoke arises. One great factory has buildings which stretch for miles along the edge of the river. Even the water of the river is affected; instead of being fresh and clear it is a dirty-brown color, and its banks are covered with dead trees and low, straggly bushes. If one rises to a higher level, the town becomes clearer, and some of the streets are visible. Occasionally there is a flash of fire from one of the huge Bessemer furnaces. People are hurrying to and fro, and there are no loiterers in this busy section. Farther back, in the distance, is the commercial part of the town, and farther back still, although this portion can scarcely be distinguished, is the residential section.

11. Nowadays no officers carry a sword dismounted except in dress uniform. The Colt forty-five-caliber automatic pistol is carried on the right hip. All second lieutenants are dressed in the regulation olive-drab uniform with leather puttees. All the officer's belongings which he takes into the field—such as shaving-kits, ponchos, and blankets—are carried by wagons, so that officers have nothing to carry except their side-arms. The equipment of officers in the field must be as compact as possible, and the officers never carry more than



is absolutely necessary. This is especially true of second lieutenants, who must always be close to their men. The training and equipment of the American army officer is considered by most military men the best in the world.

12. The buttons are soaked for twenty-four hours, and are then dried in sawdust. They are then delivered to the polishing room. Just what takes place in there is a secret, but to a layman's view it looked like more soaking and sawdust-drying, but when the buttons came out they were surely changed. They had a wonderfully bright luster. Some buttons instead of being polished are "smoked." This secret process turns the buttons black.

13. All this destruction of food in the country meant starvation for the cities. The sale of foodstuffs has been entirely in the hands of the landowners. With them dispossessed, and their stores confiscated or destroyed, the source of supply was practically wiped out. Prices for what food could be had in the cities rose to enormous figures. Returned soldiers and others worked up a profitable trade by making daily trips into country districts, bringing back provisions and selling them secretly, regardless of government restrictions and rationing cards.

14. Fifteen minutes later a rescue boat from the English Revenue Cutter *Cecil*, which had run down the black ship, picked up a survivor who was nearly exhausted from his injuries and his stay in the water. It was Schulz, who had barely escaped with his life; his head was cut and one arm broken, while his whole body was shaken up. That night he lay half unconscious with several bandages about his head. The cutter had remained several hours, making repairs necessary for the present and searching for any signs of life that might have escaped the wreck, but without success. The traitors had died a traitor's death. Fate had laid her hand on the mystery ship.

15. I slowly came to realize that the trail was not so steep as my first terrified glances had pictured. To be sure, it remained at that more precipitous than my taste could have wished; but I perceived, as my senses returned, that our descent lay in a winding zigzag course down the canyon's side. Moreover, I discovered that at each turn one seemed to stand upon a sort of pedestal, elevated far above the infinite depths of space below. My mule also became conscious of that fact; or I dare say had been made aware of it during previous trips. He ambled along the path's outward edge, scorning my vain endeavors to persuade him that a safer margin would be greatly appreciated. At each dreaded turning-place his highness invariably continued straight ahead, as if quite intending to walk into airy nothingness, but when his fore feet had reached the brink itself, he would turn in a tired, dejected way in the right direction with a slight twitch of his ears.

16. I now had a cozy little room, but with very little light. The one light was in the center, and as it was surrounded with flags and pictures, I made two splices—one leading to my desk, the other just over my bed. I then ran a string by means of screw-eyes around the room and connecting with one central string that extended from the bedpost to the light. By this means I was able to stand anywhere in the room and switch the light on or off. The room was now complete except for the window. This I rigged up with pulleys and ropes, so that it could be operated from the bed. Room number 23 was the envy of all, and it was comfortable.

17. English and Spanish are the two great languages of the Western Hemisphere, and an extensive mutual knowledge of them in the United States and South America must precede a right understanding. One of the great benefits that must come out of this war is a better understanding between France and the United States, because millions of your young men, while in France, will learn to speak French and will become acquainted with French customs and institutions and have the pathway opened for an appreciation of French culture. From France they will bring back with them much of value to the future of this country, and their knowledge of French will keep this country in closer touch with French currents of thought. France will, of course, receive many reciprocal benefits. The doorway to this profitable understanding and sympathy will be a knowledge of French on the part of Americans, and of English on the part of Frenchmen. I cite this to emphasize the importance of the study of English by young men in South America, and of Spanish by young men here. Each youth who does this can receive a benefit far beyond what can be measured in money gain, for each language represents a great literature and culture.

18. This wealth of Arizona is very elusive and not to be directly sought for. I remember reading about six months ago of a man who, pleasure-riding one day, picked up a pretty blue stone to keep as a souvenir. He still has the souvenir—also a rich copper mine. But that is an unusual case. Men there are who search during their whole lifetime for the rich gold, silver, and copper deposits. They go on a prospecting trip while yet youths, and then another, and another, until they become fully developed "desert rats." Once started, it is hard for them to break away. And then finally, when the great day comes, when they have made their "strike," they find it isn't what they expected. It isn't the gold they want; it's the looking for the gold, with the days and nights in the open. That is Arizona's wealth.

19. Shylock is the Hebrew money-lender of *The Merchant of Venice*. We cannot read the book or see the play without disliking the man

for his character and ideals. Probably his most evident quality is his hatred of anyone or anything Christian. This natural dislike is increased by the way he is treated by Antonio. As he says, he was spat on and kicked like a dog. It is for this reason that he makes so harsh an agreement with Antonio. This hatred is shown again when, at Bassanio's invitation to lunch, he says that he will neither eat nor drink nor pray with the Christians. A fact that makes his dislike all the greater is that his daughter eloped with a young Christian. When in the last act Antonio is saying good-bye to Bassanio, he tells his friend to bid farewell to Portia for him. Bassanio, full of sorrow, says that he would give Portia herself to save his friend. At this the old Jew says that Bassanio is a typical Christian husband to make a statement like that about his wife.

## CHAPTER X

### COHERENCE IN THE PARAGRAPH

If I watch a mason lay a brick, I seem to see a very simple operation. All he does is to dish out a trowelful of mortar, slap it down on the last brick laid, make a trench in it with the point of his trowel, lay a brick on it and tap the brick down, scrape off the mortar that is squeezed out at the edges—and that's all there is to it. But if I take the trowel and lay the next brick, I find myself surprisingly awkward.

When we see authors take a few "carry-on words," neatly spread them in an opening sentence, attach the second sentence with one natural movement of thought, prepare in the same motion for the third thought, lay the fourth sentence so that it follows straight and squarely, tap the whole securely into position with two or three slight strokes—then the writing of a paragraph seems a simple operation. But if we have never had any definite training in putting sentences together, we may find ourselves surprisingly awkward in our first efforts to be workmanlike. Every little act in good construction requires a certain skill that can be gained only by experience. And it is a more diversified skill than is demanded for laying bricks; since every brick and trowel is like every other brick and trowel, while no sentence is ever just like any other one. A paragraph is always a new bit of architecture.

Nevertheless this chapter is not about any mysterious art, nor does it set forth any intricate or difficult principles. Its purpose is rather to impress one simple piece of advice: "Notice how you arrange your material." Most of us can never be artists in composition; we cannot profit by a treatise on artistic subtleties. But we can heed the exhortation to "notice how you arrange your material." If any student learns to be careful

about his arrangement, he has mastered nearly all that a text-book can teach him. This chapter simply shows a number of examples of the carelessness of students, and points out specifically how they failed to "notice the arrangement of material."

A paragraph in which all the sentences are properly placed to bring out one idea with good emphasis is called "coherent." (*Coherent* means "fitting properly together.") In previous lessons we have seen a good many well-constructed paragraphs; here we shall examine some that are incoherent, finding out just where the boggles are. That is the most striking and effective way of learning how to avoid errors. When we see the mistakes made by other people, we get definite instruction in making our own writing coherent.

The following fourteen sections have to do almost as much with oral composition as with written; they will be found directly useful when applied to oral work. Since printed pages can refer only to printed examples, confusion is avoided by speaking always in terms of written themes; but the student should realize at every step (with the exception of sections 11 and 13) that he is reading advice about oral composition.

**1. The danger of relying on "link-words."** In a coherent paragraph the sentences are usually linked together: the second sentence may begin with "That is why"; the third may refer back to the second by using "Contrary to this." A careful writer is alive to the impression made by each sentence, and so plans to carry the reader's mind along easily in a "straight line" of development. The most common link-words are such adverbs as *however, nevertheless, still, moreover, indeed*. These are very useful words, but they are not emphasized in this book—for a peculiar reason: most students readily acquire the trick of using them, grow rather fond of them, and fall into the way of supposing that if they put a "however" or an "in fact" into a sentence, coherence is thereby insured. And reliance on this merely mechanical trick sometimes spoils coherence. Utterly unrelated topics may be linked together verbally, so that a reader could be taken around the world and back again by a sheer process of

saying "this" and "such" and "that reason." For example, read the following paragraph:

As I look out of my window I see a pear-shaped plot of grass in which are planted a number of dwarfed Japanese shrubs. These were imported by a landscape gardener who had developed a taste for that sort of thing while he spent seven months in Japan. He was not there on business, however, but for his health. He was threatened with chronic neuritis. Just what that means I am not sure, for the dictionary merely says that *neuritis* is "an inflammation of the nerves." Now, why should that word have two *m's*? It will be a good one to try on Father. If he misses it, he will not dare to make so much fun of my poor spelling in future.

That paragraph is a bit of nonsense, made up to show the possibilities of "incoherence by linking unlike subjects together." No student was ever guilty of quite that amount of folly when he was seriously trying to write well. But thousands of students every year construct blocks of sentences that are—by a logical test—as irrational as that.

If we read the following three sentences intently, we feel that the linking devices merely deceive us. Almost a third of the words are used for reference. We go violently ahead from Thanksgiving to Christmas, then soar back to "previous years," bumping into a "large scale" of which we have never suspected the existence.

At Thanksgiving time it is a custom in our school to take dinners to poor families. This year we not only supplied twenty families with food, but with our extra money gave a Christmas party to some very poor children. It is true that we have done this in previous years, but never on such a large scale or with such success.

The paragraph was part of a good theme. The writer had an orderly mind, but had never had her attention called to the fact that no amount of linking can, by itself, secure coherence.

**2. A mere "string of things."** The next example has unity—of a kind; it is all about furnishing a room. But it has no more coherence than so many pieces of cloth and furniture in a warehouse.

After a week's time we began to feel a little more at home in our "double." We hung dull green draperies across our bedroom doors and covered the window-seat with the same material. The window-seat extended the width of the study under two windows, so that was a lengthy task. The curtains to the windows were plain scrim and orange-flowered cretonne. My roommate's gray oak desk blended beautifully with the grayish walls, and so we bought a book-case of the same material. My family sent me a handsome Persian couch-cover, so what did we care about a mattress?

This type of paragraph is most likely to occur in description; the writer recalls a list of actions in the order in which they were done, or a row of items in the order in which they were seen, and sets them down in that sequence. He has followed a time order, and therefore supposes that he is coherent. But he gives us no impression of one topic. If, in this case, the sentence about the desk and book-case had been omitted, and if the writer had concentrated on "the color scheme of curtains and covers," the parts of the paragraph would have fitted properly to emphasize one idea; there would have been coherence.

**3. Shifting back in time.** We have just seen that the mere keeping of a time order will not insure coherence. There is no one handy recipe for keeping the parts of a paragraph properly related, any more than there is one medicine that will maintain a person's health. Coherence can be secured only by a general alertness that "notices how it is arranging thoughts." But keeping the right time order comes nearer than any other formula to being a cure-all for paragraph health. What happened first? which do we see first? what does the reader need to understand first? which reason naturally comes first in order of time?—the writer who always pays heed to these questions is more than likely to fit together a coherent portion of his composition.

A writer who crawls backward in time is peculiarly exasperating.

Steel is a gray-colored metal which, because of its strength and toughness, is used for many purposes. All steel is made by mixing iron and carbon together in certain proportions. To make steel, iron ore

first has to be made into pure iron. Iron is found usually united with some other elements. This ore is mined and is sent to the smelters, where it is put into blast-furnaces.

The writer begins with "steel used for many purposes," goes back to "iron mixed with carbon," moves still farther back to the mining of iron, and then forges ahead to iron in blast furnaces. He was an intelligent boy who, from this point, developed an orderly theme. If he should see his paragraph thus detached and printed in a textbook, he could hardly believe his eyes. There are thousands of equally intelligent pupils, every week, in all parts of the country, who fail to notice the curious "back-tracking" in some of their own paragraphs. Perhaps no one caution would be more useful to them than this: "Notice your time order."

**4. Shifting back in place.** "Notice your place order." A writer who moves us on from A to B and on to C, and then comes back to B, irritates us. Even thoughtful students will now and then forget which way they have been going, or how far they have gone, and so will oblige us to loop the loop because they have been lazy. The following illustration is petty enough in itself, not worth getting excited about; yet, just because of its pettiness, it is a more useful exhibit than some egregious blunder would be.

He had not been seated long before he started to roll up his trousers. And what a sight he displayed! Instead of his own legs he had a pair of wooden ones that were fastened on somewhere above his knees. He continued to roll up his trousers until he uncovered his legs as far as the knees. His stubs, filled with holes, produced a terrible effect.

In the third sentence we mount up to "somewhere above his knees," then drop down to the point where he "started to roll up his trousers," and finally get up again "as far as the knees."

**5. Shifting the thought order.** From what topic, to what other topic, and then back again, do these next paragraphs ramble?



Of all the places I have mentioned in which the boys of the country could be useful the farms are the places where they can be most useful. A farmer boy does not need the training that a factory hand does. He can go to work and, if he possesses ordinary intelligence, be useful the first day he starts. A factory hand, though, has to have someone teach him his tasks; so he is worse than useless at first, as he interferes with the work of one of the skilled men. The same is true of a shipbuilder.

The farm is a far healthier place to work than a factory, etc.

If only the writer had begun with the factory where a boy has to be taught, and had passed to the farm where the boy does not have to be taught, he could have kept a straight line of advance to the farm as a healthy place. Notice, in your own writing, whether you are making your reader dizzy by whirling him about in a thought-circle.

**6. Shifting back in emphasis.** The next illustration is written in such a straightforward way that we might not at first sight detect anything wrong.

In my observations I found that foreigners easily surpassed the Americans in skill and amount of work accomplished. The skill they showed was quite astonishing, and how easily they outdid the Americans in every respect! No work was too hard for them, and they talked little and worked hard. If they were not familiar with the work, they learned with lightning rapidity. An American laborer, on the other hand, was directly opposite. He continuously looked for the easier positions, and only in a few cases showed himself proficient in his work.

Those first four sentences march right ahead with "how well the foreigners worked"; the fifth takes us straight on with the topic already announced, "how different the Americans were"; and the last continues the topic coherently. What, then, is the failure? It is in the last six words, "showed himself proficient in his work." The last impression left with the reader, the climax of the paragraph, is contradictory to all the rest; from the inefficiency and laziness of the Americans we double back to their "proficiency" as a conclusion. Does this seem like a small matter? It is. But so is the point of a nail small. And yet if

the very tip—not a hundredth part of the whole—is bent back, the nail is worthless. Take pains always to see that the point of your paragraph is in a straight line with all that goes before.

**7. Self-contradiction.** Of a similar sort, though much more glaring in its effect, is any form of contradicting in one part of a paragraph what is implied in another part.

Most stretches of country are interesting to the trained and minute observer. All nature was created by God, and, contrary to what the majority of human minds would have done, He has chosen to mix the interesting and the uninteresting stretches of land and sea.

That illustration is chosen because it is not strikingly bad. Few of us ever directly contradict ourselves within a paragraph; we usually show some logical connection; but we all tend to waver away from a proposition. So here. The principal idea surely is that “most stretches of country are interesting”; this statement is then partially offset or dimmed by speaking of “uninteresting stretches,” because if they are “mixed” with the other kind, they must be rather numerous. The paragraph therefore indicates that there are *very few* uninteresting stretches and also a *great many* uninteresting stretches. It contradicts itself.

**8. A double purpose.** The next paragraph presents two reasons for working on a farm—one in the first two sentences, and the other in the last two. Name the two purposes.

How much better it is to present oneself at a recruiting station in perfect physical condition and with a mind that is active and precise than to offer one's services when in the worst of physical and mental condition. We owe it to our country to do something that will better prepare us to uphold the honor of the nation, and work on a farm or in a summer camp is the very thing. Now when labor and food are scarce, everyone looks to the country for help to relieve the tension of food shortage. The country needs help, and if one works on a farm during the summer, it is of great value to the country and indeed a patriotic act.

The writer failed to notice in advance what one purpose he had in mind, and so wandered off to a different purpose without knowing that the road had forked.

**9. Jumbled by an illustration.** On page 181 the paragraph about the study of Spanish has most unusual proportions—so unusual; indeed, that it is dangerous as a model: three fourths of the space is taken up with a pure illustration, the parallel case of the advantages of learning French. The writer clearly showed where he was taking us, referred to French as simply an example of his present topic, and led us through in good order to the close. His paragraph, though hard to follow, was coherent. But when an amateur attempts such a structure, he is likely not to keep a firm hand on his material, and as a result his paragraph may be somewhat askew.

Not far from my town is a large camp, so that I have seen a good deal of the men who are in service. All are loud in their praise of the Y. M. C. A. One fellow I remember distinctly because he seemed to be so different from the other soldiers. He came from the state of Vermont, so he told me, and being very homesick one night, he wandered around the camp. Soon he heard the sound of music. "Where could that come from in this dismal place?" was his thought. Finally he came to a hut. Having nothing else to do, he entered. Soon his homesickness was all gone, and he decided that Uncle Sam was not such a tyrant after all. It was a Y. M. C. A. hut! This is but just one of the many ways in which the great Association helps to cheer the soldiers.

In the main the paragraph is coherent. Did you observe the small ways in which it gives a double effect? Scrutinize it again. What topic is announced in the first two sentences? How is this topic altered in the last sentence? All the material between is the illustration of the general statement; surely, then, it ought to be about a soldier who is very much like all other soldiers; *was* this one like all the others? does "the state of Vermont" make his testimony more valuable?

**10. Omitted thoughts.** The writer of the following had one idea, of which a good paragraph might have been made. Can you guess what it was?

Finally in December the service-flag came. It was hung over the entrance and was greatly respected by all the students. Our prin-

cial, nearly every morning, would read us a letter written by one of the alumni from an army camp. These letters, although not written by any great writer, had their effect upon the school. They would tell of the good times at camp, the new friends, and the wonderful experiences.

If you could read this in connection with the rest of the composition, you would see that it tries to say, "Keeping in touch with our school friends in the army had an inspiring effect." The writer has set down a kind of framework for developing that topic, but has kept her purpose a secret. She has omitted the very thoughts that count. If, in the first sentence, the service flag had "brought the war home to us," if the second sentence had explained that the letters from our mates were "another thing that made the war real to us," if the third sentence had spoken of letters written by "our own friends," which made us feel that "we too had a part to take in the great contest," and if (instead of "good times" and "wonderful" experiences) we had been told of "hard work" and "using our lives for our country"—then one idea would have been set forth. As the paragraph stands, it is a kind of shorthand that we can hardly read. Teachers often have to puzzle over these cipher messages written as paragraphs by students who omit their principal thoughts.

**11. Broken bits.** The writer of this seven-paragraph description might try to justify himself for his remarkable performance thus: "Each of my divisions is about a new time and a new scene."

We boarded the train in high spirits, about a dozen of us. Our pleasant chatter ran through the car, causing weary passengers to brighten up and smile.

After about two hours all got off except three. We continued our journey till about half past two in the afternoon, when we had to get off to change cars at a little town in Ohio.

The wait at the station was for almost two hours, and in the town there was no amusement whatever. After what seemed an indefinite period of time to us the other train came along. We bought a section in the Pullman car and settled down to take the rest of the journey as easy as possible.

When supper was being called through the train, we went out to the diner, where we spent a very pleasant hour, eating, laughing, and talking.

After supper we got off at the next stop to stretch our legs. We now had a straight run to Selma, a little town where we were going to change.

After changing at Selma we had only sixteen miles to go on the train. Our parents met us at the train with automobiles to take us home from the station.

I arrived home very tired after my all-day ride, but nevertheless glad to get home.

The writer's defense of his paragraphs is true in a way. In each case he has, by the very definition given in Chapter VII, two strong reasons for each one of his divisions—(1) a new time, (2) a new scene. By the same logic his ten-year-old brother could justify a set of "paragraphs" like these:

I got out of bed.

I brushed my teeth.

I went down to breakfast.

I went to school.

I played marbles at recess.

The small brother has not written a theme. Neither has the traveler. A list of times and places and doings is not a theme, for its parts are not "composed" together; and the uncomposed items are not paragraphs—no, not if they are a century apart in time and a thousand miles in space. To jot down such a series of "after two hours" and "the other train" is childishly easy, and the jottings are not worth reading. If a high-school author finds that he has three such fragments in succession (except, of course, for dialogue), he may know from the mere appearance of his page that he is not constructing paragraphs, but is laying out a row of broken bits of topics. A 300-word theme of more than five paragraphs (always excepting quoted dialogue) almost certainly contains one or more fragments.

**12. The flourish of introduction.** Stevenson had a hard struggle to begin *The Wrecker*, and lesser writers have testified

that beginning a composition is the hardest part of the work. A majority of amateurs feel that some kind of flourish is necessary in order to get under way for a short theme.

The art of baking is by no means a modern invention. It was first practiced by the early Egyptians, who baked their crude food on flat stones placed near a hot fire. Baking, however, has advanced with civilization until now it has reached a high degree of efficiency. To take up the process step by step, we will first follow the flour, then the plant, etc.

That method of going back to the Egyptians is not an unusual example of the "pitcher's wind-up" that some young authors seem to find necessary before they can begin to deliver their thoughts. The flourish is very likely to produce incoherence, as in the above example, where the Egyptians and their hot stones are not combined with "the process step by step."

**13. Failure to make the last paragraph.** (This is really a matter of unity, but is better discussed among the various typical errors of paragraph-making.) Students who have been scared away from the use of fragmentary divisions are sometimes afraid to paragraph a concluding statement that is a comment on the whole subject of the theme. Any such final remark, of a general or summarizing kind, ought to appear as a separate paragraph, for its topic is entirely different from the last step of argument or explanation. The paragraph below should be divided; for the first part tells of one way in which a student council is superior to a senior council, and the second part says that "the whole success" of a student council must depend, after all, on the support of the general school spirit.

Now in the case of a student council these difficulties would not arise. There are members from every class, and the questions arising can be discussed and decided much better and much more satisfactorily. Each class would have a certain interest in it and would be encouraged to do its best. Of course, the whole success of this system depends on the spirit that is instilled into it and on the support of the school. Not a mere change in our laws, but only the determined will of our whole democracy, can insure the result we hope for.

The last sentence of a descriptive or, explanatory theme frequently takes us on to a decidedly different time or circumstance from that of the last main topic. In such a case the single sentence should appear as the final paragraph, as in this conclusion of a story:

As for the jewel, he had better have some native return it, or, if that was impossible, have it cut up and sold. He said that he would adopt the latter course.

Next morning my friend was found dead in his bed, his jugular vein cut by two long tusks, which remained stuck in the flesh.

**14. The wavering end.** It is not true that every paragraph ought to reach a decided climax at the end, but it is true that a writer should at least always "notice how he concludes every paragraph." Incoherence is much more common at the end than elsewhere. The constant experience of theme-readers is to find a paragraph of exposition or reasoning which keeps its course firmly up to the last sentence, and then unaccountably veers off to weak emphasis, or to contradiction, or to a mere illustration that forms a postscript, or to a new topic. Notice how you terminate each paragraph. Those final words are in the most important position; a blunder there is twice a blunder.

If a paragraph is about Gray's *Elegy*, it ought not to shunt us off to Pope at the end.

Gray kept his *Elegy* with him for eight years after it was written, rewriting and polishing its phrases, so that it was qualified in form to be considered one of the best poems written. Gray owed his success to two things: first, to his genuine interest in the poorer class, his sympathizing with their pleasures and hardships; second, to his beautiful way of describing nature, as "the droning of the beetle." Pope would never have thought of writing about beetles or swallows. He would have called it vulgar.

This next illustration, though somewhat scrappy in structure, could be called coherent if it did not drift away to another kind of consideration at the end.

Lectures are the best way of appealing to a great number of people. They are more direct, more simple, and more personal than pamphlets.

A pamphlet can be dropped if one tires of it, but a lecturer, if he is a good one, will not lose the interest of his hearers. Lectures are a quicker way of reaching people. It does not take as much time to attend a lecture as it does to obtain the same facts in reading and studying, and the former method is generally more satisfactory to the busy person. The lecturer usually is a man well-versed in his subject and knows far more about it than the average man could acquire by years of study.

If there are to be only four sentences on the simple topic of "the generosity of the people of Warburg," why should the writer leave her own home town and fly "throughout the country" with a Salvage Plan *at the end* of her paragraph?

Then in the Red Cross drives for money the people have given freely. In the first campaign our quota was oversubscribed a trifle, and in this recent drive it was very much oversubscribed. The Red Cross salvage department is also adding funds to the society's treasury daily. In fact the Warburg Salvage Plan is being adopted in many cities throughout the country.

A teacher who reads themes year after year marvels increasingly at the indifference of students to *the end* of a paragraph. A boy once wrote a 2000-word composition—a forceful and orderly one—on "the need of studying Spanish"; the last words of the last paragraph were "the study of German." His senses, which were acute and vigorous at all other places, seemed to desert him at the most important point—*at the end*.

Blunders as curious as that are not common. The more usual—and therefore more dreaded—type of incoherence at the conclusion is the weak and aimless wavering off to an item that just happens to catch the writer's eye at that moment; he leads us into a clump of brush to see this little thing—and we have to scramble back to the road as best we may. In the following paragraph about a lumber-mill, for example, there is no disorderly thinking; but after we have started with that entertaining bit about "the squeal," and have kept right on to a funny pun about "the bark;" and keep straight ahead to those particulars of the utilized products—then we feel as if, *at the end*,



we had been thrown into the furnace. We have to force our way out before we can get back into the company of the writer.

As the pork-packer claims to utilize everything but the squeal, so the lumberman may be said to use everything but the bark, and even this is often used in tanning. Beside the lumber, the other products got from the log are pulpwood, slabs for fuel, and refuse, which is used to supply the mill with fuel.

Why would it not have been better to begin less entertainingly? Why not tell first about those other products, and then close strongly with "everything but the bark"? That would not do for a general recipe; some paragraphs may be better when introduced by a bright remark. But five times out of ten an incoherent paragraph does "run down" and "peter out" like this one. Ten times out of ten a writer should consider whether he is in danger of starting strongly and ending weakly; and he should contrive to avoid that sort of failure.

Attending only to a climax will not secure coherent paragraphs. Coherence is not to be had simply by heeding time order, or by avoiding a double topic—or by employing any number of formulas. The student should not consider this chapter a classification of rhetorical principles, nor should he feel worried and hampered by the long array of errors. He should, instead, assure himself that the chapter is an illustrated talk to enforce one simple kind of advice, which need cause no perplexity: "Notice how you arrange your material."

### EXERCISES

Make specific criticisms of the following paragraphs. A few of them are properly constructed; in those cases name the one topic which is coherently developed. A few are debatable, so that the judgment of the class will be divided. But the greater number are distinctly faulty. Don't "peck" at every tiny flaw that you think you see. Don't attempt ridicule unless you feel

sure that the error is due to absurd carelessness (there are not many examples of this kind). Remember that every paragraph was written by an intelligent student of the tenth or eleventh grade, that most of the themes from which these extracts come were reasonably good, and that you are dealing with those occasional slips that we all make now and then. The time of the writers was limited; you are not judging complete compositions written with leisure for deliberate planning and revision, but with mere parts of compositions that were, in the main, passably done.

The method of judging should be this: fix your attention on just what the first sentence says, see whether this thought is carried on by the next sentence, observe just where the third sentence takes you. Your task is to observe closely. A critic must not be eager to find flaws, but eager to observe closely.

Don't try to classify the errors under the headings given in the chapter. Notice just what the arrangement of material is, and then report on each particular mistake as you find it. Examples of "specific criticism" are the sentences in this chapter that introduce the paragraphs about Gray's *Elegy* and Generosity in Warburg.

1. For a hundred feet up from its roots the trunk is broken only by occasional stubs of branches and great knots, but the top is one mass of green foliage, which covers up the lightning's wounds. The branches, as is usual, are densest on the south side of the tree, and here is the nest of a crow. The nest on the outside looks crude, and the crows seem to know it, for always one of the birds seems to be working on it. The great tree is but a remnant of many others, and soon it will fall, leaving a vast hole in nature's charm.

2. The plot of *The House of the Seven Gables* is not unusual, although the method of building it up is. Hawthorne uses the old plot of the rich man oppressing the poor man, and as a result being killed by supernatural agencies. Then, as usual, the curse pursues the rich man's descendants. At the conclusion the author attempts to show the groundlessness of superstition, but is unconvincing, owing to the fact that he half believes in the supernatural himself. The book, like most romances, has no set purpose except to please.

3. When the "earn and give" campaign began in our school, I was very glad to pledge myself to do work. But that is easier said than done, especially for one who has never really worked before. Recent years, however, have wrought changes in humanity, and one was my ardent desire to work and obtain money for such a worthy cause. You see they did not want boys to give money from their allowances.

4. Far away from land and out on the white-crested billows of the ocean our little submarine-chaser bobbed along. We had been out for four days and were to stay for three more before returning to port. All the crew with the exception of the lieutenant in command and the lookout were grouped in the motor room in the effort to keep warm, for it was winter, and the waves froze to the deck before they had time to run off. There had been an unusual amount of submarine activity off Boston Harbor, and accordingly there were more chasers out than usual.

5. But this is only the simplest part of the industry of coal-mining. Sometimes the shafts are miles from the breakers, and much difficulty is found in transporting it hence. Sometimes storms cause floods, and machines to carry off the water must be installed. This water, however, is used in washing the coal; so, although much damage is done by it, it is necessary for the working of the mine.

### 6. Mantell's Hamlet

After a moment's pause I saw Hamlet, portrayed by Mr. Mantell, enter and kneel before the King. There was an instant of silence, and then applause.

Surely he is a great artist, for everyone forgot to think of Mr. Mantell, and was concerned only with Hamlet. "What bearing did the ghost have upon the fortunes of this sorrowful prince?" I am sure each one of the audience asked such a question, rather than, "Has Mr. Mantell light or dark hair?"

That was not Mr. Mantell on the stage—it was Hamlet.

That was my first impression of Mr. Mantell's genius, at his entrance in the tragedy *Hamlet*.

7. When Christmas approached one year, my pocketbook was rather flat. How I was to supply each member of the family with a present I did not know. The thought of making something myself struck me. Immediately I hunted up one of those dear magazines that tell you what to do—though somehow you are always unable to do it. I came to a page headed "Christmas Gifts for a Quarter." "All right," I said; "I'll take the first thing on the page." It was a camp-stool.

8. Then we go into the back room and see the swimming pool. It is filled with boys, laughing and splashing around like fish. There a boy can have the best fun, diving and swimming to his heart's content. Every boy must take a shower bath before going in the pool. There is a diving board, and at one end the pool slants down toward the middle. This is for the boys that can't swim. On one side of the swimming pool are lockers where they may keep their clothes while they are in the water.

9. *The Lives of the Poets* is considered by Macaulay to be Johnson's greatest literary production. Although Johnson had contracted to devote only a paragraph to each poet, and perhaps a page to the more important ones, he published ten volumes, in which he gave splendid accounts of the lives of the English poets from Cowley down to Pope. This work was received at once with such eagerness by the people of London that a second edition soon had to be printed. Johnson, however, received but a small sum for this masterpiece, as he did for all his other works also.

10. A few years ago the stiff collar was always worn to a party, dinner, or dance. Now, however, it is gradually being worn less and less, until eventually it will probably go out of use. To the older person, especially to the mothers, the stiff collar is the ideal neck-wear. A person, to their mind, looks much neater with a stiff collar on than with just a soft one on. As a result of this many people argue that it should be worn at dinner-time.

11. It is, however, in the rural districts, where there are no steam or electric lines within fifteen or twenty miles, that the truck comes into its own. The farmer usually has his milk in the cans about six in the morning. A team and driver are necessary to take the cans to the station. A team pulling a good load seldom makes more than five miles an hour, even with extraordinarily good roads. Thus much time is lost. There is now operating near Washington, D. C., a company whose trucks make daily stops at the different farmers' places and collect the milk, fruit, and vegetables that are to go to the city. The drivers take orders for dry-goods and groceries that are needed by the housewife. The next day the goods and the money for the produce (less a certain percentage and the cost of the orders taken) are given to the farmer. By this method no time is lost, and the expense of getting the goods to the market is materially reduced.

12. Every girl loves a room of her own, and so when I grew up out of the nursery, I too wanted "my own room." But which room could I have? For many days mother and I had our thinking caps on tight, and we pondered as to which room I should have (not that we

live in a mansion with many, many rooms, but most of our rooms were occupied). The mother, a most ingenious and original mother, too, said, "Cornelia, I am going to fix up that storeroom, and then your long-cherished dream will come true." But at first I didn't see how that storeroom, with its heavy wooden shelves covered with odds and ends, could ever be made into a livable, cozy room. As I said before, mother is a most ingenious person, and when she once undertakes to fix something, one may expect wonderful results.

13. The school library is most certainly not what it should be. It is true that it has a good supply of books and magazines. The room itself is comfortable and well-lighted. It is a success in this respect, but in many other ways it is not. We would not like to have the library open only at certain hours, and then to have a teacher or monitor in charge. At present it is open all day long, and boys are at liberty to come and go as they please, but unless we are more careful in our use of this reading room, some change in the privileges will have to be made.

#### 14. Beginning of "Seeing a Plant"

While at home on a vacation last fall, I, with two of my friends, had the great pleasure and experience of visiting the immense plant of the American Steel and Wire Company.

We made a systematic inspection of the whole plant, beginning at the scrap-iron plant and working our way through many other connected factories until at last we arrived in the factory where the finished product was found.

I will now attempt to describe and narrate our dangerous and intricate journey. As before said, we began at the scrap-iron plant. This plant is a large square space where scrap-iron and steel are dumped from railroad cars, and are smashed into a solid mass.

15. Although *morale* is a new word, it is by no means new to bodies of fighting men. Caesar, during his campaigns in Gaul, several times was called upon to speak to his men because their morale was weakening. However, nowadays, with the immense armies we have, it is impracticable for one man to attempt to subdue a mutinous regiment simply by making a speech. But still this must be done, and this titanic task has fallen on the army Y. M. C. A.

16. Gigantic elms surround the old manse, far above which I can see a hawk swooping around, looking for some prey. I sit down in the great blanket of shade spread on the ground by these monarchs, and, as I close my eyes, my mind wanders down the crooked lane to contentment.

17. The Plattsburg type of school is a very efficient way which the government has found to train men for our army at present, but the best officers are those who have graduated from West Point. When we hear of someone who has graduated from West Point, we do not stop to think what it means. Those cadets enter West Point with very little knowledge of what it is, and after being there for a month or two they realize that it is no easy task. After four years of hard work they graduate and are ready to fill a commission in the army. While staying at the Academy they are paid sixty dollars for each year, and the equipment, etc., is given to them.

18. Perhaps it is because I am not much of a reader that I did not enjoy this book. It is a long, deep book, and, to me, was hard to read and become interested in. It contains the story of Franklin's entire life, giving accounts of most trivial and unimportant events. Franklin tells much about his experience as a printer, and he gives advice to young men starting in the printing business. As I have said before, this book failed to interest me, but to say the least, it did me some good. It was the first unabridged autobiography that I had ever read, and I think it shows Franklin to be a very cultured, well-educated man.

19. As food is the most important article of human existence, so the place where that food is prepared should be given the greatest consideration. Too often that most necessary room is barely mentioned at all. This was not so in the time of our forefathers. The earliest records that have been handed down to us speak of the family gathered before the roaring fire where the pot was sizzling and the mutton browning on the spit. My own grandmother, who was well known for her skill in cooking, took more pride in her kitchen than in any other room.

20. I began to get a little used to these sudden turns and hills, and could enjoy my ride a little. Finally I noticed that we were up at the top again, going at a terrible pace. As we went around a curve, I saw an awfully steep hill right in front of us. I grabbed Father and hung on. It seemed as if we would fall out of the car on the people's heads in front. Everyone yelled, but I was so terribly scared that I couldn't do anything except hang on. At last we shot around the last curve, and drew up at the landing. I got up, but, as I stepped on the floor, my legs seemed to give way. Though I was never so scared, I could go home and tell the others that I had been on the coaster.

21. One night it had been very quiet, just after dark, as it generally is when an attack is to be made. His company had been in the

trenches for two weeks, and all the men were tired, nervous, and sore that they had not been relieved. The Germans had not done much for a long time and were expected to attack any time.

22. The question now arises as to whether Bristol was right or wrong in lying. He had had practically no time to think about the matter; he had had to make up his mind in an instant, and undoubtedly he did what he thought was best. He may have been right, but in my estimation a lie is never justifiable. Although no one ever likes to tell on a friend, especially on a roommate, there are occasionally times when this is necessary, and I think this was one. Before one takes the course that Bristol did, let him remember the old adage, "Two wrongs never make a right."

23. When the poor working girl comes home to her hall bedroom Sunday night, it is not a very joyful outlook to have to spend her evening sitting in that forlorn hole and reading some dime novel. Why should she not go to the movies and enjoy herself in a perfectly harmless way? It certainly is more educating for her to see the better class of modern movies. I am decidedly for Sunday movies and baseball, as they are better morally than loafing; and, as they could be, they would be a marvelously good influence.

24. A boy who does farming is the one who is patriotic. The food supply of the country must be doubled in order to feed our allies. Even if the men should stay in the field, many more also would have to go there in order to produce this great surplus of food. But some of the men are going to the front, so the country has only the boys to raise the food supply. The boy on the farm will also be patriotic because he must sacrifice the pecuniary advantages of the man in the mill. Still the difference will be made up in the health and strength which he gains while on the farm. There is not a better place to live than on a farm. When a person is sick, the doctor sends him to the farm. The boy-farmer will work in the open and will be breathing in the pure air instead of the impure air of a factory in the city. He will be fed good, wholesome food, and he will be physically tired when he goes home in the evening. He can then sleep and rest. Any person who lived such a life would have to be healthy. So the boy who goes on the farm this summer is helping his country and helping himself.

25. In one of these factories the noise is almost deafening. Guns are repeatedly being tested which bang away all day. Then, too, the noise of the machines, which are run by power, keep up continually day and night. Electric trucks and trains travel in the buildings and outside with their roaring and puffing. Still one gets accustomed to all this, but at first his night's rest is somewhat impaired by this deafening noise  
imagines he hears.

26. In our opinion such a plan of student government would aid greatly toward instilling moral courage and honesty among pupils. Many boys feel that it is perfectly honorable to cheat a teacher, but when they are placed on their honor, their attitude immediately changes, and they become perfectly honest and upright. This honesty soon becomes a habit with them, so that in later life they are always reliable. Under the present system a boy does not feel like a criminal when he disobeys a school rule by going off and smoking. However, if the boy knew that there were members of his class who would report him when they saw him doing this, he would never take the chance, because he would feel that if fellows would have you expelled for such an act, it must surely be wrong.

27. It was up to me to crank, and crank I did, but to no avail. The dry-batteries had run down. It took about three more hours to get new ones. By this time I was impatient; I had had visions of riding along within two or three hours after my arrival. Therefore I was determined, if possible, to start that engine on this try. The new batteries being placed, I poured a little gasoline into the top of each cylinder to make sure of ignition when the spark jumped. By my former cranking I had loosened up the engine enough to make this attempt easier; I advanced the throttle as far as it would go, retarded the spark, opened the cut-out, turned on the electricity, and cranked.

28. The time when I returned from Brazil was one of the most pleasant experiences of my life. I had hardly got into the house and seen my own family before the telephone rang and old friends gave me a warm welcome. After supper, which I had alone with the family, and which was a very happy meal indeed, some fellows who had been my best friends and who had been on the old school quartette with me came in. They had brought along some of our old songs, and while my sister played for us we sang as we had seldom sung before. They told me that we were to sing the following night at a social given by the high school. I was glad of it, for it was like old times again to sing with the same fellows. The next day was as pleasant as the first day, and every day of my visit was filled with pleasant experiences.

29. Some say that the movies form depraved tastes, which cause people to neglect good reading. Others, however, say that the movies are educational; that those who neglect good reading are only those who paid little attention to it at the time before the cinematograph became popular. Let us see, however, a few reasons why some say this habit is injurious.

30. The materials of which paper is made are—namely: wood pulp, rags, hemp, cotton, old papers, silk, and woolen waste. Among the chemicals and minerals are: clay, sulphite, formaldehyde, and alum.



During the course of this theme we shall consider the manufacture of the paper used in this book. This paper is made mainly from cotton rags, old ledger paper, wood pulp, about eight per cent clay, and some alum.

31. Norton has contributed generously to all "drives." Norton's quota in the last Red Cross drive was a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. It gave a little over three hundred thousand dollars. Everyone seems anxious to do his or her part. If a family has not been asked to do its part, or if it has not done its bit, it is one of the most unpopular families in the town. There have been only one or two cases of this, however.

32. This Beatrix Esmond was a handsome girl, very vain, and never happy unless she had men around her to admire her beauty. When Charles came to live at the Esmond house in town, she set out to make another conquest, and was so successful that, rather than lose her, the Pretender was willing to forfeit the crown of England. When Henry Esmond came to rescue his cousin from the Stuart, however, he was told to mind his own business by Beatrix, and incurred her violent hatred as a result of his pains, for he wished to spoil her plans.

33. The mountain district is far better than the other sections of the South. The mountains contain almost all the wealth of the South. Every man can produce the necessary articles of life. He was at one time independent of the outer world, but now he wants more luxuries. He is not dependent on other people for his food. He raises his own corn, vegetables, and animals. Every farm is a combination of the different industries that are necessary to supply the wants of a people.

34. As the winter progressed we found that everyone was rather depressed, and no one seemed to have the vigor and enthusiasm of other years. So many of the girls were personally connected with the war, in that some member of their immediate family was either in France or on the way. This was of course not a factor which added to the enlivening of the school. For this very reason we did very little war work outside of Red Cross and Liberty Bond campaigns. We struggled along trying to have more gay times, such as fancy-dress parties and the like, to raise people's spirits.

35. From far off this small clump of things [a factory town], which blots the landscape, contrasts wonderfully the product of man's endeavor with the mightiness of the Lord's creation. It shows that the human race is nothing more than a spot on this world, which is only a part of the Creator's universe. This town, which shows the height of man's endeavor, is nothing as compared to the greatness of the world. It is a good thing for a person to see a large town from a distance and to feel these things.

36. The first thing to do was to take out all the clothes and other things that happened to be put there and to clean the place out. After that, of course, the first thing was to get a bed. After I had got the bed and placed it in one corner, the next things to get were some chairs and a table. We had those in the house, so they did not have to be bought. The two chairs were placed, one beside the bureau, which was along the wall of the side opposite the bed, and the other at the foot of the bed. The table I placed in the other corner on the same side as the bed. I then got a wash-stand and a book-case. The wash-stand is in the corner opposite the table, and the book-case is between the bed and the table.

37. In most of our large power-plants where the power is secured from fast-flowing water the turbine wheel is used. This is a large wheel upon which paddles are so arranged that as one part of the wheel is under the surface of the water, the rushing flow strikes some of these paddles. They are so arranged that they offer a great resistance to the water. Therefore the force of the water not only turns the turbine wheel, but the resistance made by these paddles forces the water to give up all the energy which it possesses, and then it passes on.

38. For tents any good quality will answer, and having selected your location, you should start right in and clear it of all undergrowth. Smooth the ground by breaking up all the mounds and leveling them out. After you have cleared and leveled a space about twenty to thirty feet in radius, you may begin placing your tents. These should face to the south to admit the sunlight as much as possible. Stake your tent down carefully and neatly, as it pays. Now dig a ditch around your tents and also a ditch to carry the water away. The floor of the tent may be covered with boards, but this is not necessary.

39. The cry of "help the government" has been broadened to mean "help each one who deserves help." Service has helped keep the public and private property of the school safe. Formerly students would steal books while others looked on; now nothing can be taken, because each student sees to it that the others' property is safe. This is one of the greatest changes for the better. Even the faculty, it seems to me, are more willing to help and encourage. It used to be necessary to have teachers in all the halls to keep the building from being damaged, but now not one teacher is seen guarding the halls. And about waste paper, very little is seen on the floor after the lunch period, when three years ago it was literally necessary to wade through it. These are but a few of the effects of the idea of service.

40. In the valley there lies a little factory town. As we look down on it from the top of a steep hill about a mile away, we seem to be looking into a cloud which lies over the entire central part of the village,

leaving only the outskirts visible. As we look again, we see that it is not a cloud, but smoke, coming in black puffs from half a dozen tall chimneys, all within a few blocks of each other. Without the smoky area, to the right of the town, is a pretty section of green trees, through the foliage of which we get glimpses of cheerful white houses, seeming to smile at us because they are not in the smoke. Near by, a steeple rises above the tree-tops, and even as we watch, the old-fashioned chimes ring out the hour. A little to the left of the church a gray stone building peeps at us through the trees, and we infer that it is the library, since that is the only building in a New England town that is likely to have so dignified and aristocratic an appearance.

#### 41. Evils of the Movies

When a young boy or girl gets a little money, he usually goes immediately to the moving pictures. Here his head is filled with murders, robberies, suicides, and the like. He will go to the moving pictures every time he gets a little money. He will be craving to see moving pictures. The child will practice these things at home. Many accidents and deaths will happen because of them.

When these children grow up, many of them will develop into smoke-fiends, drunkards, thieves, jail-birds, and even murderers and suicides!

A child will come out of the moving pictures and see another friend of his coming out also. They will go home and play robbers and murderers. One of the children will find a revolver in one of the drawers in the bureau standing in his father's room. "Oh!" the child says. "Now we can play real murderers."

#### 42. A Noon Hour

It was lunch hour. From different doors we could see crowds of employees pouring out, jostling one another as they went, in their haste to get home for their dinner. Some we saw start toward long rows of little brick houses, each exactly like its neighbor. All these small homes were owned by the factories. If an employee had a wife and no children, he was sent to Street B, where every house had a kitchen, sitting-room, and two bedrooms. If he had a wife and two children, he was sent to Street X, where each house was a little larger.

Other men as they left the factory sat down in a shady spot and ate what lunch they had with them. But before we could see anything else of interest, the conductor walked through the train calling "all aboard," and we resumed our journey.



## PART THREE

### SENTENCES

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#### CHAPTER XI

##### PASSING FROM ONE SENTENCE TO THE NEXT

###### A. BY REFERENCE WORDS

Chapter X explained how coherence is secured in a paragraph by a proper arrangement of material; we were considering there the general structure of the whole group of statements. In this chapter we are to think of the contrivance of each separate statement; we are noticing each sentence, to see how it is planned for carrying on the thought of the previous sentence and for preparing the way to the next sentence.

In ordinary composition a statement is not an independent unit. Its form and meaning are largely determined by what has gone before and what must come after. Any passage of orderly writing will show this dependence of sentences upon one another. When Sir Peter, in *The School for Scandal*, has scolded his wife for buying flowers at an extravagant price in winter, she replies:

And am I to blame, Sir Peter, because flowers are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I'm sure I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet.

As the writer composed each sentence, he had in mind what had just been said, what thought the reader then had. When the reader's mind is engaged with "blaming her for extravagance," he reads next of "am I to blame?" When this question is before

him, he moves on from that impression with "you should blame the climate" to "you should not blame me"; and when he is thinking of "me," he goes on easily to "for my part."

Of course if Sheridan could come back to life he would testify: "I paid no attention to all this linking rubbish; I kept my thoughts on getting a laugh from the audience." That was the truth. He kept his thoughts *on the audience*. He was as unconscious of his many linking devices as a tennis player is of how he gets the ball up into the air to serve it. No athlete or artist can be perpetually conscious of each particular little motion. Those small acts are habitual, unconscious; his attention is on the ball, or the melody, or the perspective. That is always true of people who have acquired a knack. But when they were beginners, their untrained muscles had to attend to each movement. They fumbled or struck wrong notes until the muscles had been taught. Perhaps they had no teacher, but "picked up" an art by experimenting, and so never made any analysis of what the nerves were doing.

Literary artists have usually learned their art by experimenting; they have "picked it up." And that is by all odds the best way to learn. Any formal anatomy of compositional methods is sure to frighten a beginner. This chapter is not an anatomy, but a display of what writers have done, designed to help students to observe, to experiment, to teach themselves how to improve in the knack of linking their sentences together. If it can teach the lesson of "observe with your own eyes what artists do," it will be valuable.

See how Goldsmith managed his passing from one sentence to the next in the concluding paragraph of Chapter III of *The Vicar of Wakefield*.\* The Vicar has just listened to Mr. Burchell's long account of Sir William Thornhill.

(1) My attention was so much taken up by Mr. Burchell's account that I scarce looked forward as he went along, till we were alarmed by the cries of my family; when, turning, I perceived my youngest daughter in the midst of a rapid stream, thrown from her horse, and struggling

with the torrent. (2) She had sunk twice, nor was it in my power to disengage myself in time to bring her relief. (3) My sensations were even too violent to permit my attempting her rescue. (4) She must have certainly perished had not my companion, perceiving her danger, instantly plunged in to her relief, and with some difficulty brought her in safety to the opposite shore. (5) By taking the current a little farther up, the rest of the family got safely over, where we had an opportunity of joining our acknowledgments to hers. (6) Her gratitude may be more readily imagined than described; she thanked her deliverer more with looks than with words, and continued to lean upon his arm, as if still willing to receive assistance. (7) My wife also hoped one day to have the pleasure of returning his kindness at her own house. (8) Thus, after we were refreshed at the next inn, and had dined together, as Mr. Burchell was going to a different part of the country, he took leave, and we pursued our journey, my wife observing as he went, that she liked him extremely, and protesting that if he had birth and fortune to entitle him to match into such a family as ours, she knew no man she would sooner fix upon. (9) I could not but smile to hear her talk in this lofty strain; but I was never much displeased with those harmless delusions that tend to make us more happy.

In the paragraph that preceded this one the reader has almost forgotten the Vicar's family that is riding along to a new home. Goldsmith, too, had almost forgotten; for he had probably been engrossed during two or three hours in composing the story of the curious character and life of Sir William, ending with "finds most pleasure in eccentric virtues." He may have laid down his pen as he reached the end of this long section, may have walked about the room for a minute, deciding what to say next. The idea came—to have this poor stranger (Mr. Burchell) rescue Sophia from drowning. As he dipped his pen to begin the next hour's work, he was thinking of Sophia "struggling with the torrent," and might naturally have begun, "Sophia had suddenly been thrown into the stream." That would have been a typical amateur failure—to follow the steps of his own mind, to forget where he has left the reader, to plunge into the water a mile ahead of the reader with the words "Sophia had suddenly." On Goldsmith's page there would have been a leap from "eccentric virtues" to "Sophia"—a broad jump that few of us

could take easily. Goldsmith carried us over with "My attention was so much taken up that I scarce looked forward, till"—and thus we are spared the feeling that a careless author is willing to drown us in the torrent.

When, at the end of that first sentence, we are occupied with the picture of Sophia "struggling with the torrent," Goldsmith does not immediately jump us to "my power" to save her; he carries the account on smoothly by showing how desperate the struggle was: "She had sunk twice." Sentence three carries on "nor was it in my power" by explaining why: "My sensations were too violent." Sentence four continues the thought of "not attempting her rescue" by beginning with "she must have perished."

No skilful author ever continues indefinitely to begin each sentence with words that directly refer to the last words of the previous sentence. Such constant and obvious linking would be officious, monotonous—actually wearisome. As a mere matter of words the fifth sentence is an abrupt shift from "the opposite shore" to "the current." Yet no unpleasant exertion is required of a reader. This modifying phrase ("by taking the current") conveys *us also*, in *safety*, to that *opposite shore*, where we can join our thanks "to hers." "Her gratitude" is an obvious link. She thanks him in sentence six with looks and actions, and "my wife also" is very grateful in sentence seven. "Thus" is a vague word that implies "with this kind of assurances of our gratitude we continued our journey." We learn in sentence eight how favorably the Vicar's wife has been impressed: "if he had birth and fortune," she would select him as a husband for Sophia. "This lofty strain" links the last sentence.

It is safe to say that Goldsmith was not aware of each one of his devices for hooking the sentences together. His mind was not directly busied with the words that couple the statements so neatly. He was conscious only of keeping his eye on the reader. It is a commonplace of literary criticism that an author must "keep his eye on the object"; the one great piece of advice in golf is ~~to keep~~ your eye on the ball; Sheridan kept his eye on the

audience; a careful writer must always, as he passes from sentence to sentence, keep his eye on the reader. If he attends merely to link-words, he will not help the reader. *This* and *such* and *yet* cannot by themselves carry us from sentence to sentence, any more than a coupling-pin can move the cars in a train. The motive force comes from the author's concern about where he is taking his reader. His transition to the next sentence may be abrupt, and yet be pleasant, if his thought is truly sequent. If his eye is on the reader, the devices will almost manage themselves.

#### B. BY THE ORDER OF IDEAS

In R. H. Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast*\* there are three paragraphs that make an exposition of "the irregularities of the law under Mexican rule in California"; the second paragraph shows how some Kentucky hunters went unpunished; the third shows, as a contrast, how an Indian was quickly punished. It begins by referring to the previous topic ("not so tardy"), and it contains three expressions that might be called reference words: "from his falling horse," "a few weeks afterwards," "a week after I saw him." Yet these are simply to keep the time order clear. In the main the account is given without link-words.

(1) When a crime has been committed by Indians, justice, or rather vengeance, is not so tardy. (2) One Sunday afternoon, while I was at San Diego, an Indian was sitting on his horse, when another, with whom he had had some difficulty, came up to him, drew a long knife, and plunged it directly into the horse's heart. (3) The Indian sprang from his falling horse, drew out the knife, and plunged it into the other Indian's breast, over his shoulder, and laid him dead. (4) The fellow was seized at once, clapped into the calabozo [the jail], and kept there until an answer could be received from Monterey. (5) A few weeks afterwards I saw the poor wretch, sitting on the bare ground, in front of the calabozo, with his feet chained to a stake, and handcuffs about his wrists. (6) I knew there was very little hope for him. (7) Although the deed was done in hot blood, the horse on which he was sit-

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\* Lake English Classic edition, page 235.



ting being his own, and a favorite with him, yet he was an Indian, and that was enough. (8) In about a week after I saw him, I heard that he had been shot.

The order of ideas is: (1) justice comes quickly to Indians who commit crimes; (2 and 3) I once saw an Indian commit a rather excusable crime; (4 and 5) he was seized at once and chained to a stake; (6 and 7) there was no hope for him, although the crime had been excusable; (8) he was shot. The thought in each sentence follows easily and logically without link-words. This is frequently the case in narrative.

Even in passages of close reasoning there is no necessity of link-words; the only necessity is that the ideas shall follow in logical order. Darwin, in *The Descent of Man*, wrote a series of paragraphs to prove that lower animals have the same emotions as human beings. After he had discussed terror, suspicion, anger, jealousy, and shame, he took up "the more intellectual emotions" in the paragraph that follows. There are several words that refer to the contents of previous sentences ("this latter quality," "at his account"); but most of the transitions come—so far as mere link-words are concerned—rather abruptly. Darwin does not rely on word-hooks to keep his thoughts in orderly progress. If he had been writing a mere string of "funny things I saw in the monkey cage," the absence of link-words would not be worthy of comment here. But the paragraph is not a narrative; it is an analysis of a subtle question: "Can it be proved that monkeys feel *the emotion of curiosity?*" In presenting his experiments Darwin is not a slave to *moreover* or *indeed* or *nevertheless* or *however*. Many amateurs would have felt compelled to use *however* in writing sentences 8, 12, and 15: "*however*, a few monkeys did not notice"; "*however*, they behaved very differently"; "*but* monkey after monkey, *however*, could not resist." Of course Darwin knew this remarkable word and was not ashamed to use it occasionally, but he is quite able to get along without it for several consecutive pages.

(1) We will now turn to the more intellectual emotions and faculties. (2) Animals manifestly enjoy excitement, and suffer from ennui,

as may be seen with dogs, and, according to Reugger, with monkeys. (3) All animals feel wonder, and many exhibit curiosity. (4) They sometimes suffer from this latter quality, as when the hunter plays antics and thus attracts them; I have witnessed this with deer, and so it is with the wary chamois, and with some kinds of wild ducks. (5) Brehm gives a curious account of the instinctive dread which his monkeys exhibited toward snakes; but their curiosity was so great that they could not desist from occasionally satiating their horror in a most human fashion, by lifting up the lid of the box in which the snakes were kept. (6) I was so much surprised at his account that I took a stuffed and coiled-up snake into the monkey-house at the Zoölogical Gardens, and the excitement thus caused was one of the most curious spectacles which I have ever beheld. (7) Three species of *Cercopithecus* were the most alarmed; they dashed about their cages and uttered sharp signal-cries of danger, which were understood by the other monkeys. (8) A few young monkeys and one old Anubis baboon alone took no notice of the snake. (9) I then placed the stuffed specimen on the ground in one of the larger compartments. (10) After a time all the monkeys collected round it in a large circle, and, staring intently, presented a most ludicrous appearance. (11) They became extremely nervous; so that when a wooden ball, with which they were familiar as a plaything, was accidentally moved in the straw, under which it was partly hidden, they all instantly started away. (12) These monkeys behaved very differently when a dead fish, a mouse, and some other new objects were placed in their cages; for, though at first frightened, they soon approached, handled, and examined them. (13) I then placed a live snake in a paper bag, with the mouth loosely closed, in one of the larger compartments. (14) One of the monkeys immediately approached, cautiously opened the bag a little, peeped in, and instantly dashed away. (15) Then I witnessed what Brehm has described; for monkey after monkey, with head raised high and turned on one side, could not resist taking momentary peeps into the upright bag, at the dreadful object lying quiet on the bottom.

The order of Darwin's ideas is: (1-3) various animals feel the emotions of excitement, ennuï, and curiosity; (4) curiosity is strong in deer and ducks; (5) Brehm says that curiosity compels monkeys, who dread snakes, to look at them; (6) this surprising statement I tested with a stuffed snake; (7-11) most of the monkeys were alarmed, were made nervous; (12) but they were not alarmed by other strange or repulsive animals; (13)

they *were* alarmed by a live snake; (14-15) in spite of evident alarm their curiosity compelled them to look at the snake.

Does this comment seem like what you saw in Chapter X about "coherence in the paragraph"? It is somewhat similar. Coherence in the paragraph is secured largely by passing properly from one sentence to the next. The difference is one of emphasis. In this chapter we are thinking primarily of "what must be done in this sentence?"

If you state your ideas in the proper order, there is no need of continually tugging at a reader's hand to lead him along with link-words. Your task is to lay the stepping-stones so that he can see them—to lay them firmly, so that he will have confidence for each step.

A reader passes readily into each succeeding sentence of a composition if the writer has watched carefully to see in what direction he has sent the reader's mind, and just where he is going to send it next. What is necessary for this performance? Perhaps some dexterity with link-words or with words that refer to the idea of the previous sentence; but certainly and always a carefulness in so placing each thought that it shall stand, not as an independent unit, but as a natural step from the thought of the previous sentence.

### EXERCISES

Explain briefly, but definitely, how the transitions from sentence to sentence are made in the following passages. Use some such plan as this: number your statements to correspond with the numbered sentences; state in a few words the chief thought of each sentence; include in quotation marks any linking words that carry along the thought of the previous sentence—for example:

1. I saw my daughter in the stream.
2. "She had sunk twice" before I could bring her relief.
3. I was powerless to "attempt her rescue."

4. "She must have perished" if my companion had not rescued her.

### 1. Benares and Its Rajah

(1) His first design was on Benares, a city which in wealth, population, dignity, and sanctity, was among the foremost of Asia. (2) It was commonly believed that half a million of human beings were crowded into that labyrinth of lofty alleys, rich with shrines, and minarets, and balconies, and carved oriels, to which the sacred apes clung by hundreds. (3) The traveler could scarcely make his way through the press of holy mendicants and not less holy bulls. (4) The broad and stately flights of steps which descended from these swarming haunts to the bathing-places along the Ganges were worn every day by the footsteps of an innumerable multitude of worshipers. (5) The schools and temples drew crowds of pious Hindus from every province where the Brahminical faith was known. (6) Hundreds of devotees came thither every month to die: for it was believed that a peculiarly happy fate awaited the man who should pass from the sacred city into the sacred river. (7) Nor was superstition the only motive which allured strangers to that great metropolis. (8) Commerce had as many pilgrims as religion. (9) All along the shores of the venerable stream lay great fleets of vessels laden with rich merchandise. (10) From the looms of Benares went forth the most delicate silks that adorned the balls of St. James's and of the *Petit Trianon*; and in the bazaars the muslins of Bengal and the sabers of Oudh were mingled with the jewels of Golconda and the shawls of Kashmir. (11) This rich capital, and the surrounding tract, had long been under the immediate rule of a Hindu prince, who rendered homage to the Mogul emperors. (12) During the great anarchy of India the lords of Benares became independent of the Court of Delhi, but were compelled to submit to the authority of the Nabob of Oudh. (13) Oppressed by this formidable neighbor, they invoked the protection of the English. (14) The English protection was given; and at length the Nabob Vizier, by a solemn treaty, ceded all his rights over Benares to the Company. (15) From that time the Rajah was the vassal of the Government of Bengal, acknowledged its supremacy, and engaged to send an annual tribute to Fort William. (16) This tribute Cheyte Sing, the reigning prince, had paid with strict punctuality.

*Macaulay's Warren Hastings*

### 2. Remembering the Harrison Campaign

(1) I have a personal friend who is an officer in one of the large universities of this country and who was once engaged in conversation with

a judge of the courts around a fireplace. (2) They had come in from hearing a political speech, and entered into conversation about it and various reminiscences, when in the course of it my friend remarked that he remembered the Harrison campaign. (3) He went on to describe the processions, the songs, and doggerel poetry, and recalled incident after incident of that memorable campaign. (4) The judge recognized the correctness and accuracy of the incidents, but remarked that he did not know his friend was so old as this recollection implied. (5) His friend remarked, "Oh, yes; I am old enough to remember it." (6) The judge asked him how old he was, and the friend replied that he was born in 1847. (7) The judge thought he must be mistaken, and said so, but his friend replied that he was not, and that he could certainly remember his birthday. (8) The judge then politely recalled the man's attention to the fact that the Harrison campaign had taken place in 1840. (9) The friend's historical knowledge at once informed him that the judge was correct, and he went away completely at a loss to account for his memory. (10) He felt personally confident that his memory was correct, but his other and historical knowledge showed that he was wrong. (11) That night when he had retired, it all at once occurred to him that when his mother died, in 1855, he was sent, a child of eight years, to live with his uncles. (12) The chief incident in the memories of these uncles, in a rural community, was their part in the Harrison campaign in 1840, and they used to entertain him and their neighbors with rehearsals of its scenes, processions, songs, poetry, banners, and all the paraphernalia of such occasions. (13) All this had so possessed the infant imagination of my friend that it was a real thing to him, and all that his memory could reproduce was the mental pictures of what he had seen and its association with the name of Harrison. (14) As a child he did not, and perhaps could not, distinguish between the real and the reproduced incidents of that campaign. (15) What had occurred, therefore, in the story to his friend the judge, was the recollection of his actual experience dissociated from his actual historical knowledge.

James H. Hyslop, *The Borderland of Psychological Research*

### 3. Burns on the Way to Edinburgh

(1) The journey of Burns from Mossgiel to Edinburgh was a sort of triumphal progress. (2) He rode on a pony, lent him by a friend, and as the journey took two days, his resting-place the first night was at the farm-house of Covington Mains, in Lanarkshire, hard by the Clyde. (3) The tenant of this farm, Mr. Prentice, was an enthusiastic admirer of Burns's poems, and had subscribed for twenty copies of the second edition. (4) His son, years afterwards, in a letter to Christopher North,

thus describes the evening on which Burns appeared at his father's farm: (5) "All the farmers in the parish had read the poet's then published works, and were anxious to see him. (6) They were all asked to meet him at a late dinner, and the signal of his arrival was to be a white sheet attached to a pitchfork, and put on the top of a corn-stack in the barn-yard. (7) The parish is a beautiful amphitheater, with the Clyde winding through it—Wellbrae Hill to the west, Tinto Hill and the Culter Fells to the south, and the pretty, green, conical hill, Quothquan Law, to the east. (8) My father's stack-yard, lying in the center, was seen from every house in the parish. (9) At length Burns arrived, mounted on a borrowed *pownie*. (10) Instantly was the white flag hoisted, and as instantly were seen the farmers issuing from their houses, and converging to the point of meeting. (11) A glorious evening, or rather night which borrowed something from the morning, followed, and the conversation of the poet confirmed and increased the admiration created by his writings. (12) On the following morning he breakfasted with a large party at the next farm-house, tenanted by James Stodart; . . . took lunch with a large party at the bank in Carnwath, and rode into Edinburgh that evening on the *pownie*, which he returned to the owner in a few days afterwards by John Samson, the brother of the immortal *Tam*."

J. C. Shairp, *Life of Robert Burns*

#### 4. The Failure of the Pretender

[Charles Edward expected the Jacobites to flock to his army for the overthrow of the House of Hanover, but the kindly policy of Walpole had destroyed most of the hatred of the Jacobites for that House.]

(1) The war with France had at once revived the hopes of the Jacobites; and as early as 1744 Charles Edward, the grandson of James the Second, was placed by the French Government at the head of a formidable armament. (2) But his plan of a descent on Scotland was defeated by a storm which wrecked his fleet, and by the march of the French troops which had sailed in it to the war in Flanders. (3) In 1745, however, the young adventurer again embarked with but seven friends in a small vessel and landed on a little island of the Hebrides. (4) For three weeks he stood almost alone; but on the 29th of August the clans rallied to his standard in Glenfinnan, and Charles found himself at the head of fifteen hundred men. (5) His force swelled to an army as he marched through Blair Athol on Perth, entered Edinburgh in triumph, and was proclaimed "James the Eighth" at the Town Cross;

and two thousand English troops, who marched against him under Sir John Cope were broken and cut to pieces on the 21st of September by a single charge of the clansmen at Preston Pans. (6) Victory at once doubled the forces of the conqueror. (7) The Prince was now at the head of six thousand men; but all were still Highlanders, for the people of the Lowlands held aloof from his standard, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he could induce them to follow him to the south. (8) His tact and energy, however, at last conquered every obstacle, and after skilfully evading an army gathered at Newcastle he marched through Lancashire, and pushed on the 4th of December as far as Derby. (9) But here all hope of success came to an end. (10) Hardly a man had risen in his support as he passed through the districts where Jacobitism boasted of its strength. (11) The people flocked to see his march as if to see a show. (12) Catholics and Tories abounded in Lancashire, but only a single squire took up arms. (13) Manchester was looked on as the most Jacobite of English towns, but all the aid it gave was an illumination and two thousand pounds. (14) From Carlisle to Derby he had been joined by hardly two hundred men. (15) The policy of Walpole had in fact secured England for the House of Hanover. (16) The long peace, the prosperity of the country, and the clemency of the Government had done their work. (17) The recent admission of Tories into the administration had severed the Tory party finally from the mere Jacobites. (18) Jacobitism as a fighting force was dead, and even Charles Edward saw that it was hopeless to conquer England with five thousand Highlanders.

*Green's History of the English People*

Suitable material for further work of this kind may be found in the exercises for Chapter VIII.

## CHAPTER XII

### VARIETY IN SENTENCES

[If a student cannot readily distinguish between simple, complex, and compound sentences, he is not prepared to get the full benefit of Chapters XII-XVII, which assume a knowledge of the three types of sentences and of phrases and clauses. Most classes need at this point a review of syntax, which is provided in the Appendix.]

#### A. NO TYPE OF SENTENCE IS GOOD OR BAD IN ITSELF

A series of sentences, each presenting its own thought clearly, each linked to the one before, and all developing one consistent idea in a paragraph, might still be an extremely poor series. Though each of the sentences may be proper in itself, their combined effect may be unbearable. Why is the following paragraph disagreeable?

We all knew the history of the table. My brother and I had wanted to go in search of it. We had pleaded in vain for permission to search for it. I know why permission was refused. A negro named West McConnor lived at Bear Wallow. He was a thorough desperado. He was a hunter and woodsman. He was famous over three counties. He was a wild and ranging spirit. He was suspected of all kinds of lawlessness. The evidence of three murders could be laid at his door. We knew all these facts. We had become reconciled to not going up the river. Father suggested going up the river. We were surprised.

No one sentence is wrong in itself, for short, simple sentences beginning with the subject and verb are common in good literature. What is more, a series of such sentences may be found by a little searching. Jack London wrote in *The Iron Heel*:

Then he began to whine. I do believe his whine was congenital. He was a man beaten at birth. He whined about the testimony.



That passage is effective in its setting in the book because it gives variety; it is strikingly different from London's usual style, and so it stands out to show a reader: "Here are some detached observations about a peculiar lawyer." For a similar reason we like the speech of the tiger in *The Jungle Book*:

He is doomed to die! It is the man-cub who has lived too long. Free People, he was my meat from the first. Give him to me. I am weary of this man-wolf folly. He has troubled the jungle for ten seasons.

Readers have enjoyed that passage because it gives variety to the page on which it occurs; it shows how the tiger snarled and growled in short sentences.

Because London and Kipling seldom wrote a series of short sentences, they produced a rather startling variation when they did occasionally introduce such a series. But the amateur, who usually writes too many short sentences, might produce only further monotony by trying the device; and monotony is hard to forgive. Every interesting author has felt the necessity of varying the forms of his sentences—from long to short, from simple to complex, from declaratory to interrogative; if subjects have come first in three successive sentences, he begins the fourth with an *if* clause; occasionally he sprinkles in a sentence in which the first word is an object or an adjective; if he has taken a reader through a long, loose sentence (like this one), he will do something quite different the next moment. He will vary. This chapter is about variety.

A passage may be monotonous because the sentences are uniformly long. One reason why some readers find parts of *Kenilworth* dull is that there may be a set of six sentences averaging fifty-six words in length. Yet Scott was sensitive to the need of variety and furnished all that the taste of his age demanded. A passage may be monotonous because of one prevailing type of complex sentence. A passage will be monotonous, and therefore disagreeable in the worst way, if any one type of sentence is constantly employed. Every passage in literature will prove that

the author took pains to secure some variety in his sentence forms.

There is only one exception to that statement: If an author wishes to impress one effect upon us, he may use a series of statements that are all similar in form. When Dickens, in *A Christmas Carol*, wished to produce the effect of "one after another they kept coming in," he indulged in a succession of nine sentences of the same model:

In came a fiddler with a music-book, and went up to the lofty desk, and made an orchestra of it, and tuned it like fifty stomach-aches. In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast, substantial smile. In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, beaming and lovable. In came the six young followers whose hearts they broke. In came the housemaid, with her cousin, the baker. In came the cook, etc.

Yet even this studied uniformity does not, in its setting, give a sensation of monotony. It was contrived for the sake of variety. It is so unusual, so different from anything else in the story, that it stands out as a whimsical and pleasing variation. It is—if we consider the chapter as a whole—a striking proof that Dickens "took pains to secure variety." In each one of his nine sentences he was careful to follow the same opening phrase with a different construction. If any amateur feels that by a series of similar sentences he can secure a total effect of variety, let him by all means experiment with "some uniformity for a change"; but otherwise let him secure variation in the ordinary way—by varying.

#### B. TYPES TO AVOID

The following three types are not bad in themselves; they are evils in school because careless students use them too much.

1. "Uniformly and babyishly short." The University of Wisconsin once issued a pamphlet describing the different kinds of errors that are common in high-school writing, and grading those errors according to the degree of badness. The worst fault was said to be "sentences that are uniformly and babyishly short"—that is, of the kind shown at the beginning of this chapter

in the description of West McConnor. In speaking of ordinary affairs of life no one but an infant would be excusable for setting down one fragment after another in that fashion. Students in senior high school sometimes come nearer to the style than they realize. They should be constantly alert to keep as far as possible from such a model.

2. **The subject and verb first.** A majority of the sentences in English prose begin with the subject, which is often closely followed by the verb. So there is nothing wrong with that type of sentence in itself. It is bad only when it comes too often. Only because it is the overworked type, because students use it and use and use it with exasperating monotony, because it unceasingly occurs and occurs and occurs—only because it is the foe of variety do teachers dread it. Untrained students are almost sure to set down a subject and its verb, and then spin out the rest of their sentence from that point; then to set down another subject and its verb and spin the second sentence from this safe position; then to set down the third subject and its verb and feel their way from here to a period; whereupon they immediately drive in a subject-and-verb stake before venturing upon a fourth statement. Just as young people dread to have one dinner always like the previous one, or one day of a vacation always the same as the previous one, or one recitation forever similar to the previous one, so a reader cannot endure a composition in which every sentence is like every other sentence.

3. **The compound sentence.** The "and" or "but" sentences are wearisome because there are too many of them. If a child is urged to compose longer sentences, he hitches two infantile sentences together with *and*: "Chewing-gum is sweet, *and* I like it." Although teachers learn to fear that "and" construction, it cannot be called wrong in itself; for parallels can easily be found in literature. What cannot be found in literature is a thoughtless series of such sentences. They are as dreaded in school compositions as the babyishly short ones. Four consecutive sentences, otherwise well varied, are a dreary stretch if each contains two independent clauses joined by *and*.

There had been a marshmallow roast that afternoon, *and* the fire was still going. We crowded around the live coals until we were very hot, *and* then the crowd ran to a high rock. There we stood in line until a large wave came, *and* then the four of us dived in. When we had been in for almost half an hour, the water felt very cold, *and* so we hastened back to the fire.

Most students use too many "and" sentences. If they try to remedy their style by using "but," they have not introduced any real variation; for both kinds are compound, similar in effect. The evil is the repetition of the compound form.

### C. TYPES TO CULTIVATE

1. **Beginning with a modifier.** The best remedy for "and" is to make one clause subordinate—a modifier showing the time or reason or condition or place—and to put it first in the sentence.

Instead of saying, "We heated ourselves, and then we ran," say

*After we had thoroughly heated ourselves by crowding around the live coals, we ran to a high rock.*

Instead of saying, "We were willing, but we could not," say

*Though we were perfectly willing to oblige him, we could not understand what help he needed.*

The sentences that begin with *after* and *though* are no better, in themselves, than the compound forms; they are better only as a remedy for too much use of *and* or *but*.

The remedy for "subject and verb first" is to begin with a modifier. This may be a participial expression; even a solitary adverb is a welcome relief; prepositional phrases are pleasant; adverbial clauses are effective.

The untrained writer naturally produces the type of sentence shown in the left-hand column on the next page. With very little effort these could be made to begin with a modifier, as shown in the right-hand column.

1. I could be wrought upon by music while yet an infant in my mother's arms.

2. My feelings remained equally acute as I grew older.

3. I grew too old to be a plaything in a short time.

1. While yet an infant in my mother's arms, I could be wrought upon by music.

2. As I grew older, my feelings remained equally acute.

3. In a short time I grew too old to be a plaything.

If every sentence in a theme began with a modifier, the style might seem laughably artificial; if no sentence begins with a modifier, the style is immature and dull; if there are various types of sentences, the style pleases.

**2. Periodic sentences.** Sentences that begin with modifiers have a "periodic" effect. A sentence is called "periodic" if it is not grammatically complete until the last word. A strictly periodic sentence must end with either the subject or verb or complement of the verb (or a preposition after its object).

A young man who is always eager for work, whose thought perpetually is "I must be useful," will in the long run certainly win success.

Though long periodic sentences form only a small proportion of ordinary prose, and though it is poor judgment to struggle to manufacture them, an occasional periodic sentence is useful in securing variety. It is the direct opposite of the "subject and verb first" type. Instead of saying the important thing first, and then presenting a row of modifiers, the periodic sentence first displays its modifiers, and then comes to a climax. It proves that the writer knows what he is about; it produces upon a reader the effect of strength and emphasis. Why must thoughts everlastingly come strong-end-foremost, like this?

I was sent to a convent, the superior of which was my uncle, and was confided entirely to his care at an early age, before my mind had dawned upon the world and its delights or known anything of it beyond the precincts of my father's palace.

Why not occasionally make a sentence that is periodic, or practically so? Why not place the modifiers first, proceed to the convent in a good time order, and be under the care of my uncle at the close?

At an early age, before my mind had dawned upon the world and its delights or known anything of it beyond the precincts of my father's palace, I was sent to a convent, the superior of which was my uncle, and was confided entirely to his care.

**3. Modifiers between the principal parts.** Variety may be secured by placing a modifier between the subject and the verb, or between the verb and its complement.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. My parents were limited in fortune, though of noble rank. | 1. My parents, though of noble rank, were limited in fortune. |
| 2. I showed an extreme sensibility when quite a child.       | 2. I showed, when quite a child, an extreme sensibility.      |

**4. The simple sentence.** A substitute for some compound sentences is a simple sentence in which both verbs are applied to one subject. Instead of saying

The speaker had just descended from the northbound express, *and he* was standing outside the station,

omit the *he* and the comma, making a simple sentence in which *the speaker* is the subject of both verbs:

The speaker had just descended from the train and was standing outside the station.

That very slight alteration produces an entire change of structure, and so may cause a proportionate amount of variety.

**5. Inverted order.** The normal order is subject, verb, complement. An occasional inverting of this order may break up monotony. The subject may be after the verb:

Then came a gust of special fury.

An object of the verb may come first:

This we finally selected.

A predicate adjective may come first:

Funny it certainly was.

To use many of these inversions would be affectation; to strain for one would be freakish; but to use a common one occasionally is good practice.

**6. Appositives.** A few grammar lessons in appositives might bear fruit in varied sentence forms. A noun in apposition, or phrases that modify in an appositive way, would loom up on the dead level of some compositions like a cluster of palms in a desert.

a. The public has a choice between two horses with which to do the day's work—*public ownership or private ownership.*

b. A youth of eighteen, *of good family in England and of excellent education,* recently arrived in New York as a stowaway.

c. James Macpherson made a sensation in Europe and America with his *Fingal (1762)—a wildly heroic poem which, he alleged, was a translation from a Celtic manuscript.*

d. He led the way to the lower Simla bazaar—*the crowded rabbit warren that climbs up from the valley.*

**7. Interrogative and imperative.** If now and then a question can be used naturally, it will add variety.

Oftentimes at Oxford I saw Levana in my dreams. I knew her by her Roman symbols. *Who is Levana?*

An exclamation mark may liven up a page if it can be slipped in without gush or pretense.

Father was indifferent enough as he cut the string—but then the trouble began!

Occasionally an imperative sentence can be employed.

All these emotions must be strange to you; so are your rural emotions to me. *But consider,* what must I have been doing all my life, etc.

**8. Direct quotation.** A touch of life and a welcome change can sometimes be introduced by the use of a direct quotation. Our tendency is to say

She defied their arts many times by asking whether they would examine her as a witness against herself.

De Quincey thought of this variation:

“Would you examine me as a witness against myself?” was the question by which she many times defied their arts.

## D. VARY THE SENTENCES

When an author wrote about West McConnor, he arranged his sentences thus:

All of us knew the history of the tale; and on several occasions my brother and I had pleaded in vain for permission to go in search of it. I think the reason for the refusal was that there lived at Bear Wallow a negro named West McConnor, who was a thorough desperado. He was a hunter and woodsman famous over three counties—a wild and ranging spirit, who was suspected of all kinds of lawlessness, and at whose door could be laid the evidence of three murders. Knowing all these facts, we had become rather reconciled to not going up the river, and were surprised when father himself suggested it.\*

First we have a compound sentence of two independent clauses. Then comes a complex sentence with three subordinate clauses. This is followed by a complex sentence in which the particulars of the negro's fame are put after a dash—a noun in apposition, modified by two relative clauses. Since three sentences have begun with the subject, the author next starts with a participial phrase, writing a sentence in which the one subject, *we*, belongs to the two verbs, *had become* and *were*.

There is not necessarily any virtue in a simple or a complex sentence; indeed there are cases of students who have written monotonous pages of statements beginning with *after*, or monotonous pages of statements beginning with *when*, or pages of queer periodic sentences ending with expressions like "to Florida in the winter we went." One type of sentence may cause as much harm as another.

But the fact is that most students begin too frequently with the subject and verb, and that most of them use too many compound sentences; their style is improved if they can be persuaded to use more of the periodic kind and more that are complex. Occasionally there is a young writer who is too fond of length or complexity. These exceptional persons can profit as

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much by Chapter XII as if they had the ordinary faults. We can all profit by trying to cultivate variety in our sentences.

Especially in oral recitations we ought to cultivate variety. The best subject-matter, the most animated delivery, may bore us if the speaker has a habit of beginning with *and* or *so*, or a habit of beginning with the subject and verb, or a habit of using many compound sentences. Variety can be secured only by overcoming such habits, only by training ourselves to speak with other types of sentences.

## EXERCISES

### I. RECASTING "BABYISHLY SHORT" SENTENCES

Rewrite the following passages in sentences that have proper variety of form. Not all of your new sentences should be long, not all complex. Vary the types.

1. The mob was afraid that the troops would soon come and disperse them. So they were in a hurry. They eagerly relieved each other in battering at the heavy door. But this was very strong. It defied their efforts. Finally a voice was heard to shout. It said, "Try fire." The rioters shouted approval of this. They called for wood. Somehow all their wishes seemed to be supplied at once. Soon they had two or three empty tar-barrels. They built a fire close to the door of the prison. A huge red bonfire arose soon. It sent up a tall column of smoke and flame. This shone against the antique turrets and strongly grated windows. It also illuminated the ferocious faces and wild gestures of the rioters. These rioters were surrounding the place. It also lit up the pale and anxious groups of the other people in the neighborhood. These people were watching the alarming scene from their windows. The mob fed the fire with whatever they could find fit for the purpose. The flames roared and crackled among the heaps of nourishment piled on the fire. A terrible shout soon announced that the door had been kindled. The door was being destroyed. The fire was allowed to die down. The most forward of the rioters did not wait for it to die. They were impatient. They rushed, one after another, over its still smoldering ruins. Man after man bounded over the glowing embers. The sparks rose high in air when these men tramped on the embers. Butler now saw that the rioters would soon be in possession of the victim. Other people present saw the same

thing. The rioters would have it in their power to do whatever they pleased with him. Butler did not know what crimes they might commit.

2. A young gentleman asked us which was the most deserted part of these mountains. He was young and well-featured and wore good clothes. He asked us which was the most lonely part of these mountains. We told him it was this part. We spoke the plain truth. There is no road three miles west of here. There is only a footpath on the east. The young man listened to us intently. He turned his mule about. He went to the place we showed him. We had a great liking for him. We were very curious about his inquiry. We heard nothing of him for quite a while. One of the shepherds went by his place one day. The man set upon the shepherd. He did not say why he acted so. He beat the shepherd without mercy. Then he went to the donkey that carried the shepherd's food. He took away all the bread and cheese. He tripped back again to his retreat with wondrous speed. We heard about this. We resolved to hunt the man out. We spent nearly two days hunting. We looked in the thickest part of the forest. We found him at last. He was lurking in the hollow of a huge cork-tree. He came forth to meet us. He was as mild as could be. He was altered. His face was disfigured. He was thin and sunburnt. We could not have told that it was the same man. Still we thought we could recognize him by his clothes. However, these were all in rags and tatters.

3. The wished-for night arrived. I did not want to arouse suspicion. I retired to my bed at the usual hour. Soon the attendants left me. Then I dressed myself again. I prepared to receive the stranger. The clock struck twelve. The stranger entered my room. A small chest was in his hand. He placed this near the stove. He did not speak. However, he saluted me. I returned the compliment. I observed an equal silence. Then he opened his chest. First he drew out a small wooden crucifix. He knelt down and gazed upon it mournfully. Then he cast his eyes toward heaven. He seemed to be praying devoutly. Finally he bowed his head respectfully. Then he kissed the crucifix thrice. However, he finally arose. Then he drew from the chest a covered goblet. It contained some liquor. This appeared to be blood. He sprinkled the floor with this liquor. He then dipped one end of the crucifix into it. Next he described a circle in the middle of the room. He placed various skulls, thigh-bones, etc., around this. I noticed that he put all of these in the forms of crosses. Finally he took out a huge volume, and he beckoned me to follow him. I was a good deal terrified. However, I obeyed.

## II. OBSERVING GOOD SENTENCES

Write a brief description of each sentence in the following selections; bring out the differences of form, so as to show the variety in the passage. Follow the model of the comment on the "West McConnor" selection, page 227. Some students, after performing this kind of task well, speak or write monotonous sentences in their next composition; what is done as a mere exercise by one part of the brain seems not to have been understood by that other part of the brain that makes themes or recites orally. As you prepare this lesson, keep both parts of the mind busy; think of the variations that you describe here as an element of your own composition when your own tongue or pen is busy next week.

## 1

(1) The little band of fugitives were obliged to perform the distance on foot. (2) When they arrived at the port, the wind was high and stormy, the tide contrary, the vessel anchored far off in the road, and no means of getting on board but by a fishing-shallop which lay tossing like a cockle-shell on the edge of the surf. (3) The Duchess determined to risk the attempt. (4) The seamen endeavored to dissuade her, but the imminence of her danger on shore and the magnanimity of her spirit urged her on. (5) She had to be borne to the shallop in the arms of a mariner. (6) Such was the violence of the wind and waves that he faltered, lost his foothold, and let his precious burden fall into the sea.

## 2

(1) But such a broad scheme was not to be. (2) The reason? (3) It cost money. (4) That money came out of the Dutch purse—out of the budgets of the various cities. (5) The Dutch are poor just now. (6) They are prone, as a people, to look at a stuiver a long time before they bid it good-by. (7) And in their behalf it must be said that there are none too many stuivers rolling round loose these days in poverty-stricken Holland. (8) The towns and the people therein are as poor as the proverbial church mouse. (9) So, perforce, they began in a smaller way. (10) Instead of feeding a supplementary meal to all the children they chose the worst section in Delft, examined the primary-school children, and then assigned the most defective cases

for special diet and medical aid. (11) These amounted to about two thousand. (12) Careful statistics of these children are being kept to show their improvement. (13) These statistics will be presented before the various municipal boards, and it is expected that they will result in a general system of supplementary lunches for anæmic children throughout the central regions. (14) It should be said that the idea of supplementary school feeding for undernourished children is not new in Holland. (15) Delft had such a system long ago. (16) It is just a question of reinstalling the system immediately, without loss of time, not only because the children are emaciated and run-down, but also because the housing and sanitary conditions are in a dreadful state.

## 3

(1) At length he reached where the ravine had opened through the cliffs to the amphitheater; but no traces of such opening remained. (2) The rocks presented a high, impenetrable wall over which the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad, deep basin, black from the shadows of the surrounding forest. (3) Here, then, poor Rip was brought to a stand. (4) He again called and whistled after his dog; he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle crows, sporting high in air about a dry tree that overhung a sunny precipice, and who, secure in their elevation, seemed to look down and scoff at the poor man's perplexities. (5) What was to be done? (6) The morning was passing away, and Rip felt famished for want of his breakfast. (7) He grieved to give up his dog and gun; he dreaded to meet his wife; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. (8) He shook his head, shouldered the rusty firelock, and, with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward.

## 4

(1) George sprang up. (2) At the sound of her voice every nerve in his body danced in mad exhilaration. (3) He was another man. (4) Depression fell from him like a garment. (5) He perceived that he had misjudged all sorts of things. (6) The evening, for instance, was a splendid evening, not one of those awful dry, baking evenings which make you feel you can't breathe, but pleasantly moist and full of a delightfully musical patter of rain. (7) And the barn! (8) He had been all wrong about the barn. (9) It was a great little place, comfortable, airy, and cheerful. (10) What could be more invigorating than that smell of hay? (11) Even the rats, he felt, must be pretty decent rats, when you came to know them.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE ONE THOUGHT IN EACH SENTENCE

The world of educated people tells us that every good sentence must contain "one complete thought" and must not contain more than a reader can easily grasp as "a complete thought." Yet nobody knows just what a "thought" is. Indeed a facetious person might say with some truth that "one thought" is as vague as "the size of a piece of cheese." Nevertheless, educated people are pretty well agreed as to the meaning. It is the purpose of this chapter to define the limits of "one thought," to stake out the boundaries as nearly as possible, so that we may be able to judge in future whether any given sentence is a fraction, or a unit, or more than a unit. We want to learn to use only units.

The explanation of sentence unity will be made in three sections: A, length of sentences; B, unity with reference to other sentences; C, unity within the sentence.

#### A. LENGTH OF SENTENCES

A good sentence may consist of one word, giving a command to do one action:

Go.

Or only one word may be written, because the rest are easily understood:

[That is] True.

Good sentences often consist of a very few words:

You may.

Where is it?

He might have been elected.

Every such brief statement or question presents one thought.

We are within the limits of "one thought" if we include an object or predicate nominative with its close modifiers.

He might have been elected *manager of our newly organized hockey team.*

We shall still be well within the limits if we add clauses that tell "under what conditions" he might have been elected.

He might have been elected manager of our newly organized hockey team *if he had only shown a little more energy when we were trying to get subscriptions.*

If a writer wished to show that this was merely the opinion of a person who did not know the circumstances, he might include the whole statement as a part of one unified thought-group.

*People who don't understand how political machinery is run in this school suppose that he might have been elected manager of our newly organized hockey team if he had only shown a little more energy when we were trying to get subscriptions.*

There is a sentence of forty-two words, so constructed that no punctuation is needed within it. (President Wilson once wrote a sentence of sixty-one words that required no punctuation.) By including a side-remark and sprinkling in a few modifiers we might extend our "one thought" to ninety words.


People who don't understand how political machinery is run in this school *(and I might confidentially whisper in your ear that very few people do understand the workings of our little local Tammany)* suppose that *the popular and modest Bascom* might have been elected manager of our newly organized hockey team *last fall* if he had only shown a little more energy when we were trying *so desperately* to get *a few subscriptions for a sport that was then laughed at by our politicians.*

We could continue this process farther, and still have a sentence that would pass muster as a unified structure. We could, that is, as a mental feat contrive to build two hundred words around one thought in one complex sentence. By linking together many similar statements as items of a situation authors

have sometimes exceeded a length of three hundred words (e. g., Defoe and Dickens); one modern journalist has almost equaled this record by giving us in the form of a single sentence eight proofs that "Japan's record has been oppressive and immoral." But such catalogues are not regarded as true sentences; they are in reality a bunch of sentences attached to one stem by semicolons, forming one part of a long chapter or article. Except for these "semicoloned monsters," a sentence of two hundred words is a curiosity, not a product of ordinary life; a sentence one hundred words long is exceptional, even in the writing of scholarly authors; in recent literature only a small minority of sentences are more than fifty words long.

For this limit of length there are two reasons. The first is the literary fashion of our generation. Professional authors of today prefer shorter units than were in vogue fifty years ago, and the signs are that custom will go still farther in cutting down the number of words in the average prose sentence. The second reason for the low limit is the practical difficulty of construction. As an exercise in detached composition there is small difficulty, but in real life we do not manufacture sentences that way. In practice our attention is much occupied with another matter—with developing the steps of thought in the paragraph—so that we are not usually at liberty to draw up plans for a one-thought construction of large dimensions. And even if we have the time and inclination, we are engaged in a somewhat risky undertaking: we are unlikely to gain anything by an elaborate piece of architecture, and we shall lose heavily if we make a blunder. The reader will not get pleasure out of an artistic sentence because of its length; he is sure to be offended if the structure is anywhere faulty.

## B. UNITY WITH REFERENCE TO OTHER SENTENCES

1. **Short sentences that are units.** A mere counting of words, though it may indicate a danger-line, is no index to unity.  that a one-word sentence may present a whole

thought, and at the beginning of Chapter XII we saw that some sentences of ten or more words were fractions of thought. How do we distinguish? What is the clue? Here it is: "Is a sentence, in its setting, *of some importance as a separate thought?*" That is a question of judgment, of taste. A writer may wish to have each one of several small particulars appear important to a reader. De Quincey gives us a rather extreme example in his essay on Joan of Arc. He has been adducing a number of proofs that she did not recant while she was burned at the stake; our principal interest has been in the proofs; when we reach the last one, we need, in order to understand it, certain details of a picture.

And, if all this were insufficient, then I cite the closing act of her life as valid on her behalf, were all other testimonies against her. The executioner had been directed to apply his torch from below. He did so. The fiery smoke rose upwards in billowing volumes. A Dominican monk was then standing almost at her side. Wrapped up in his sublime office, he saw not the danger, but still persisted in his prayers. Even then, when the last enemy was racing up the fiery stairs to seize her, even at that moment did this noblest of girls think only for him, the one friend that would not forsake her, and not for herself; bidding him with her last breath to care for his own preservation, but to leave *her* to God.

If we found the second, third, and fourth sentences together in a carelessly written theme, we should say: "These are fragments which should be put together for unity in some such form as *when the executioner applied his torch from below, the fiery smoke rose upwards.*" We are right in saying so. But when we find the sentences in an essay of a skilful writer, our judgment is different; we know that De Quincey is indicating to us: "Each statement is of separate importance." He is like a lawyer who must make sure that the jury perceives each step in the evidence; he says, in effect: "Notice what order had been given. Notice that the order had been obeyed. Notice that the smoke was rising. Notice that a Dominican monk was standing beside Joan." Each short sentence is a proper unit because the writer,



by the general force of his style elsewhere, proves that he knows what "one thought" is. Though we may not in every instance agree with his taste, we grant his right to be impressive in this peculiar way if he now and then chooses to write thus. Teachers will always grant, freely and gladly, that a student may correctly speak, and even write, a series of jerky, brief sentences if the general force of his style elsewhere proves that he knows what he is about, and if there is any discoverable purpose in the jerkiness.

**2. Short sentences that are not units.** Those are big "ifs." To teachers who have read ten thousand themes the conditions seem to come from a lofty region, from a rarefied literary atmosphere where few students live. Down on the smoky level of ordinary school life "force of style" and "purpose" and "impressiveness" form only a small percentage of the air we breathe. Down here we breathe carelessness. We must forever try to remove carelessness. Oral composition and theme-writing are a campaign against indifference and heedlessness. Textbooks are munition-factories, and teachers are army officers, in a war against inattention. If we find that a student *designed* to speak four little sentences in a row, we salute him as an ally in a good cause. We seldom do discover that sort of design. Three little sentences together are usually a sign of carelessness; the chances are that two in succession indicate carelessness. We have to challenge them as fractions of thought and to require that they be combined—usually in a simple or a complex sentence—to form one whole.

The following sentences are not units: "Soon he came back. The picture-case was in his hand. He stood before me. He held the case open." Any one of them might, in the proper setting, be a good unit; two of them might, in the proper setting, be used as consecutive units. But by the time we have reached a third we perceive that the writer does not know what he is about; the items are not separately important as independent thoughts, but merely fractions of one thought.

**3. The setting may make fractions.** "Any one of them," we said, "might, in the proper setting, be a good unit." That remark often applies to a sentence which would have separate importance in one paragraph, yet is nothing but a fraction in other surroundings.

Slavery was once thought to be a necessary evil.

If ever a sentence deserved to stand apart, that one seems to: it is packed full of meaning. But consider it in connection with two other sentences.

Slavery was once thought to be a necessary evil. Slavery has now been abolished, but there is another great question which must soon be settled and which is steadily increasing in importance. This is the question of the tobacco habit.

In this argument against tobacco, slavery is a mere illustration; the units of thought are: (1) slavery, once thought to be a necessary evil, was abolished; (2) another great evil—considered necessary until recently—may deserve a similar fate. The first statement about slavery is here a fraction and ought to be combined with the second statement about slavery; then the second sentence should begin with "There is another great question."

Here is a sentence that appears to have separate importance:

Her host and hostess have left her entirely alone for the afternoon.

But if we find it echoing the information that has already been given, we feel that it contributes nothing but feeble monotony.

In the first place, Elizabeth has been left alone in the living-room of Mr. Collins's house. Her host and hostess have left her entirely alone for the afternoon.

Suppose that someone dipped into a paragraph and read aloud: "It may not be a success, and consequently will die out." That sounds like a stalwart, self-sufficient assertion. But all is different in the context.

Again it might be said that the golf team may not be permanent. It may not be a success, and consequently will die out. On that ac-

count it would not be right for this year's team to have their insignia.

The three little dabs of thought mystify us. What the writer meant to indicate was:

Again it might be said: "Since the golf team may not succeed, and so may die out, it would not be right for this year's team to have their insignia."

As you read the next pair of sentences, do you feel that the writer had any design in framing two rather than one?

Cast iron is very brittle and breaks easily when it receives a sudden shock. The iron is used mostly for stoves and other things which are subject to no shock.

He might at least have used a semicolon with *therefore* or *so*. Most likely his real meaning was: "Since cast iron is very brittle, it is used mostly for," etc.

Statements that are important, if judged by themselves, may be only fractional in their settings. Statements that might appear insignificantly short, when standing alone, may be decidedly important if they draw a reader's attention to a point that he would otherwise overlook. Sentence unity, therefore, is often a question of the surroundings in a paragraph.

### C. UNITY WITHIN THE SENTENCE

1. The limit with semicolons. A sternly logical person could argue that any one of the following sentences might, in a different setting, stand alone, and so has unity within itself. As a matter of strict reasoning that is true. But the impression we get as we read is that each statement is in itself childishly fractional.

There are two guest-rooms. The one in the back of the house is the larger of the two. It has mahogany furniture and twin beds. The other room has only one bed and a few chairs. This furniture is a gray color.

These "uniformly and babyishly short" statements were actually set down in just this way by an intelligent tenth-grade student who was earnestly trying to do his best. He had never heard of "fractional" sentences, nor had he the remotest conception of trying to indicate "separate importance." He places the catalogue before us as artlessly as if he were trying to sell the furniture at a bargain to people who would be excited about the facts.

If a writer feels compelled to offer the reader a number of specifications, he may avoid fractions by the use of semicolons: "There are two guest-rooms; the larger one, in the back of the house, has mahogany furniture and twin beds; the smaller one, fitted with gray furniture, has only one bed and a few chairs." That is a conventional type of sentence; it shows the reader that the one thought is "the furniture in our two guest-rooms," and it arranges the particulars in three groups. In a long composition about a play an author might employ this form to show that the one thought is "the general character of Act Three": "The first scene was pure comedy; the second was an episode from the life of General Grant; the third, deep melodrama, showed the parting of the lovers when the summons came." This "catch-all" unit is a handy device for gathering up fragments, and is proper so long as a reader easily perceives the one purpose of lumping the fractions together. Amateurs are in peril if they extend such a sentence beyond a length of three clauses, but professionals have occasionally used five or more. When Dickens wanted to indicate the bustle in the Cratchit house—everybody busy at the same moment in helping to prepare dinner—he composed this remarkable sentence:

Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy hissing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigor; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves.

That is a humorous extravaganza, the abnormal device of an artist for giving the impression of abnormal circumstances.

We ordinary people, in ordinary composition, are likely to make a sentence larger than a unit if we attempt to pack more than three independent clauses into one sentence by using semicolons.

2. **The limit with conjunctions.** We are likely to build an "improper fraction" if we try to force three independent clauses into one sentence by the use of conjunctions. We may join two complementary statements by *and*, or two contrasting statements by *but*, or add a reason with *for*, or explain purpose and result with *so*; if we use a second conjunction to hook on a third clause, we shall almost surely produce the effect of a cluster of thoughts. Yet teachers not uncommonly find proof that intelligent students are deaf to the effect of a four-clause agglomeration like this:

Grandpa had promised to take us one day, *but* the trolley was so crowded that we couldn't possibly get on it, *and* there would be no other for half an hour, *and* by that time it would be too late.

Even if the fourth clause were removed, the remainder would be hopelessly straggling. Modern custom does not permit that succession of "*but* the trolley was, *and* there would be" within the bounds of one sentence. Unless we recast, using subordinate clauses, we must begin a second sentence at "there would be no other."

Less childish and more common is the thoughtless gumming together of three clauses with *ands* or *buts*.

After all my rushing around I gave up looking for the baggage, *but*, instead, looked for my mother, *but* in vain.

It is doubtful whether any student has ever constructed a reputable sentence by using a pair of *buts* or *ands* or *sos*.

It is also doubtful whether a unified sentence was ever made with a *but* and a *so*, though thousands of young people attempt the great adventure every year.

It was terrible to take the car out in that weather, *but* it was to be done, *so* he bravely started forth.

Within the limits of "one thought" we may include the "but" contrast of the first two clauses or the "so" result of the last two; but we shall almost surely fail if we try to force both the *but* and the *so* to work together to link the parts of a unit. If we are to secure unity, one clause must be made subordinate and securely imbedded within one of the principal clauses.

It was terrible to take the car out in that weather; but, *as this was the only thing to be done*, he bravely started forth.

It is safe to say—though it sounds narrow and dogmatic—that a sentence of three similar independent clauses joined by co-ordinating conjunctions will not appear like one thought.

Notice that we speak of three clauses that are "similar." If one can be shown to be different from the other two, there will be unity. A semicolon will show the difference—thus:

We welcomed him gladly, *and* he seemed to respond sincerely; *but* I must confess that some of our old suspicion remained.

Those first two clauses are similar in importance, telling one side of the matter; the third clause is shown by the semicolon to be a contrast to all that goes before. By the use of a semicolon unity may sometimes be secured for a *but* and a *so*, a *for* and an *and*, etc.

The sunshine had been excessively hot, *so that* we were glad to have the fog come in; *but* we felt sorry for the picnickers who needed fair weather.

She was going to run; *but* he restrained her, *for* he knew that they might start a panic.

In a compound sentence of only two members there may be a subordinate clause which is so prominent in meaning that the effect on the reader is "a cluster of three."

I had been willing to wait for ten minutes, *but* any longer delay was impossible, *because* even in a taxi the trip to the station would take a quarter of an hour.

That sentence can be defended; it does not contain a real error. But it shows a dangerous tendency in the writer to strew his thoughts out beyond unity.

There is much more to be said about the unity of compound sentences, which we shall study particularly in the following chapters. It is sufficient to say in this preliminary lesson, as a summary of the last five paragraphs, that two coördinating conjunctions in one sentence are very likely to destroy unity.

**3. Two dissimilar items.** One conjunction may destroy unity if it tries to yoke together two statements that will not work as a team.

What fun it is to reach the station, situated on Lake Champlain, and then follows the twenty-five-mile ride in an unsteady Ford over unused roads, up hill and down dale, through great, high mountains, on one side covered with thick trees, and the other bare, or with unsightly black stumps, where there has been a forest fire.

The sentence is not carried beyond the limit of "one thought" by its length, nor by the writer's odd assertion that part of her fun is to see unsightly black stumps, nor by putting together the arrival at the station and the long ride. The damage is done by hooking together two dissimilar items: "What fun to reach the station," "then follows the long ride." The writer may mean that "it is fun to reach the station, *but* then follows a tedious ride"; she may mean that "after reaching the station it is fun to ride"; we have no clue to what one thought she does wish to express. (This kind of fault is treated at length in the next chapter.)

Coördinating conjunctions with clauses are deadly things. A large proportion of high-school students seem to feel sure that *and* is not loaded, that *but* will not explode; as a result they flourish these weapons in the midst of their clauses. The casualties are numerous.

This embraces a great area, *but* in my small section of these great ranges one may find scenery surpassed by no nation in the world; it includes a paradise for hunters, the greatest game country in the world, *and* one week in the clear, bracing air is enough to send a sick person on the road to recovery.

Why did this fellow have to begin with a subject and verb, and then murder his second clause with a *but*? Why was he

compelled to begin again after the semicolon with a subject, and then blow out the brains of another clause with his *and*? No great skill or forethought is required to say: "In my small section of this great area one may find scenery surpassed by no nation in the world, a paradise for hunters, and an air so clear and bracing that one week in it will send a sick person on the road to recovery."

4. The "two-chapter" sentence. Mere refraining from coördinate clauses will not insure keeping within the limits of unity. Here is a complex sentence which, while clearing a space in the woods, forgets its job, gets interested in the "little brothers," tells how they seek the sunlight, and finally leaves us hanging in the branches.

In felling a large tree a path must first be cleared for it to fall on to, which is easily done by removing the smaller trees which always surround their big brothers, seeking a little of the sunlight which filters through the overhanging branches in little rays.

Sometimes the writer of a close-knit complex sentence swings us from the business in hand, far ahead into a different story.

Macbeth's affection for his wife was returned by her to such an extent that the murder of Duncan was made possible, a crime that influenced all the remainder of his life for the bad.

That incredible statement is nearly true: her ambitious love caused murder and ruined her husband's life. But to comment on that remote result while speaking of her affection is to take a journey into a far country. The little bonds of syntax snap, and unity is destroyed.

Instead of "running on to tell a whole story" the next sentence wanders off to hint at a different story.

Just as the ball was snapped to the quarter-back, the referee called, "Time," and it was a great relief, as, if the Sumner team had had one more minute to play, there might have been a different story to tell.

The fault in that sentence is not merely the use of *and* and *as* together, but the rambling away to a different chapter of



thought. A more common and less obvious example of the same error is the tacking on of a chapter with *but* or *so*.

The next trouble that the United States had with Mexico was when the French tried to set up an absolute monarchy there in opposition to the United States, *but* this failed.

About three years ago one of my friends asked me to come over to his house and see what he had done, *so* I did.

Even while the alarm was ringing we fell asleep again, *but* not for long.

If you have centered our attention on a great effort of the French, put the failure in a second sentence; if you must use twenty words for explaining an invitation, use a period and reach the house in the next sentence; if you put us to sleep in one sentence, don't wake us till the next.

Another common and wearisome form of the "two-chapter" sentence is a statement followed by a question that is attached with "so why."

The horses are tired, *so why* shouldn't we walk?

Never attach a question to a statement with "so why." Omit the *so* and use a semicolon.

At this point we must make the sort of comment that has been made several times in previous chapters, that must be constantly understood in a textbook which gives specific advice about matters of taste: If a student finds a "so why" sentence in a carefully written novel, he has not proved that the idiom is good in school practice; the fact is that "so why" produces countless bad sentences and should never be attempted by an amateur until he has shown stylistic talent and has gained a special license.

**5. The danger of explanations.** The desire to explain often entices unwary writers away from unity.

For miles and miles we could see only fields (if it was possible even to see those, the dust was so thick).

The only unit of thought that we can gather is that "we could see only what it was impossible to see." The error was thus

caused: the writer made a statement that "we could see," then realized that the statement was hardly true, and so invited the reader to step away from this thought into a private conference about another thought. Teachers sometimes come upon an explanation that has swelled out like a huge tumor, until it reduces the main statement to a thin shell.

This, although it was quite an expensive sport—because the fine for even shooting at a gull was \$5, while if he hit one the cost was \$50 (the latter fine, however, was not necessary in my brother's case)—was a weekly pastime with my brother.

In oral composition an explanation is even more likely to cause blunders.

6. **The dangerous weapons: *and, but.*** Absurd as the long explanation about "the two fines" is, it is logically arranged; hence a reader is only amused by it. What drives us to despair is the little, illogical, muddled sentence, made in haste and carelessness with *and* or *but*.

People say these are very beautiful, *but* the monotony is tedious.

The statement must mean that "all people are wrong." The writer had a definite thought in mind, but was too lazy to put it all on paper: "Some people call these beautiful, but *for my part* I find the monotony tedious."

What one thought can you discover in the following?

In winter the room was always warm, and the addition of a comfortable morris chair and a phonograph made it all the more interesting.

The room was "warm *and* interesting." So we might say that the weather "feels hot *and* is necessary," for a man in the weather bureau may know that it is hot *and* may know the meteorological necessity for its being hot; but the rest of us ignorant readers cannot comprehend the *and*. We might understand how a room could be both "warm and interesting"; what we cannot comprehend is a room "which was warm and a chair made it interesting." The unity has been destroyed by the *and* that joins two independent clauses. In the sentence about beauty

and monotony the unity was lost because the writer supposed that *but* had a miraculous power of contrasting any statement with any other statement. These writers are like little children who suppose that a rifle will kill game if the trigger is pulled, who do not know that rifles have to be aimed, who cannot be trusted with firearms. Many high-school writers cannot be trusted with *and* or *but*—those accurate, high-power words, so effective in bringing down the game of ideas. They are the great destroyers of unity. Destructive as they are in written themes, they are more pernicious still in oral composition. Experienced teachers feel that more results come from learning about those two words than from a whole treatise on the vague topic of "unity." They will welcome the following chapters on those words, and will not be surprised to find them mentioned as a climax to a lesson about The One Thought in Each Sentence.

### EXERCISES

[Further exercise is furnished with Chapters XIV and XVI.]

Rewrite each of the following sentences in a unified form. In some cases you may find it necessary to divide into two sentences; wherever it is possible, reshape the material into one sentence by using phrases, subordinate clauses, appositives, or compound verbs with one subject.

1. All of us cannot do this, for it is very dangerous and expensive, but those who have the chance are very fortunate.
2. We heaped more wood on the fire, but even the fear of a lynx could not keep us awake, and even while the scream was echoing among the rocks we were asleep again, but only for an hour.
3. The snow is very light, so why shouldn't we try a broom?
4. I shook down a ripe fig into my hat. I cut the little sprouts from each end. Then I held it between my finger and thumb at these two points. I pared off the prickly rind with my knife. Then I gave a piece of the fruit to the boys. They approved of it most highly.
5. It took fully a month to complete the bungalow, but at last everything was complete, even to the furniture, which was made in

the neighborhood from raw material, and the night of the house-warming was a celebration not soon to be forgotten.

6. As a boy he was a great student, and as he grew up he became a tutor to the younger boys, and on account of his teachings he was for a time in disfavor with those at Athens.

7. Though I tried to ride fast on my bicycle, I seemed to be just moving, and the air was exceedingly hot.

8. The policeman yelled at me angrily to "get off that sidewalk mighty quick," so I obeyed him in a hurry.

9. The climate of this part of the country is delightful, especially of California, and, although Colorado has a most enjoyable summer climate, its winters are often severe, especially to people from the East who have not become acclimated.

10. Though the hours are rather long, as we have to be on the market at four o'clock on market mornings and five o'clock the other mornings, and do not quit work until five o'clock, I think I shall like my work very well, as the men are sociable and of the better class.

11. Jennie had apparently not seen Lloyd. She seemed to be unaware of his presence, but the instant she needed him she walked over to where he stood.

12. In most cases only a little concentration is required, and before one knows it one is buried in one's work, and when all the lessons are prepared and bed-time comes around, one can turn in with a wonderful feeling of satisfaction.

13. My chum and I are really not at all congenial, but we live on farms and are quite near neighbors, so we are naturally much together, as there is no one else near by.

14. [This sentence is not nearly so straggling as it may at first appear.] If he is of the right sort, his men will cheerfully do whatever he requires, but let him once show weakness or indecision, let him once forget even for an instant that he is an officer and consequently a gentleman, and their confidence is gone, and though through the force of discipline they may continue to obey, their morale is weakened, and they are not to be depended upon in an extremity.

15. This difference we could all see plainly enough. We could not tell what caused it. We did not have the key to the puzzle.

16. My father had presence of mind enough to reach for the "firex" which we carried with us, and in three squirts of the "firex" the fire was out, but, had he delayed much longer, this account would probably go unwritten.

17. [This sentence is much more nearly a unit than it might at first sight appear to an over-confident critic.] The squirrels hap-

pened to be out that morning, you know it is not every morning that they come out, and when they do, they usually stay only from about six to ten, and it wasn't long before we were all three busy watching the tops of the tall cypress trees, and now and then pulling down a squealing, gray squirrel, making very little noise, and always keeping within about thirty yards of each other.

18. The question of changing the dues has never been discussed since the constitution was adopted, but we are not talking of that now.

19. But we now must leave this comedy and go about our business, but the memory of the young boy who insisted on having a carnation in his hat will long remain in our minds.

20. The old editor listened without any show of emotion to her persuasive, pleading voice as she argued that the article ought not to be crowded out entirely, but finally he granted her request.

21. Many young men apply to these camps, but they go falling out as time passes, and at the end it is seen that those who are left are graduates of military schools.

22. I did not believe her smooth-sounding story, so I tried to lead her on to give me some details, for I was sure she would contradict herself soon if I could keep her talking.

23. There was a pile of letters on the desk. Enoch began to open these. He threw the letters untidily upon the floor. The first was a grocer's bill; the second was an invitation to dinner; at the third one Enoch seemed utterly astounded.

24. Our school was the first to adopt military training and has already had the experience of three very successful years, and the fourth promises better training than any previous year, as a great many of the old officers are going to attend summer military camps and will return to school next fall.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE "AND" SENTENCE

#### A. THE DANGER OF *AND*

A compound sentence consisting of two clauses joined by *and* is a common type, frequently used by all authors. The only planning required for its construction is to see that the second statement continues the first and that the two statements are of the same kind of importance. We may go farther and say that some professional writers use *and* to attach a clause which is different in importance. They employ the *and* sentence with a careless, almost an indifferent, ease. Why, then, must so much caution be enjoined upon students?

In Chapter XIII we said that *and* was like a rifle. The comparison may help to answer the present question. Experienced hunters use a rifle with indifferent ease and may not from one year's end to another feel the least fear of it. But let a novice lay hand upon the gun—then their fear is acute. They shout at him to "drop that gun." Inexperienced boys always assume that a rifle is not loaded; they like to point it at a friend, to throw it to their shoulder, to swing the muzzle about freely. Their naïve ignorance of danger is more terrifying to a soldier than an enemy sharpshooter would be. For the most reckless soldier or hunter is never reckless in that way. The more familiar a man is with firearms, the more angry he is made by any carelessness with a rifle and the more he dreads to be in the company of any youngster who supposes that the gun is not loaded. For a hunter a rifle is always loaded. He never points it without a willingness to have it go off.

A seasoned writer never uses *and* without a willingness to be challenged thus: "Will your two statements combine to produce

one effect?" He never uses *and* without a consciousness of the kind of verbal apparatus that he is pointing at his ideas. Though he may not always hit the mark, he knows where he is aiming and never pulls the trigger without a willingness to shoot in that direction. Most students in the tenth and eleventh grades are prone to point *and* at a subordinate idea, flourishing the weapon in directions where it would be deadly to discharge it. That is why teachers have to cry out, "Drop that *and*." Accidents from careless handling of a gun are comparatively rare; accidents from the careless use of *and* must happen about a hundred thousand times every day of the school year in the United States. Such statistics as teachers have gathered indicate that more than half of all the ununified sentences ever written in school themes are caused by the heedless use of *and*. Teachers who keep a record of poor sentences find that the *and* column is longer than all the others combined. If a student who is training himself in composition concentrated his efforts on *and*, doing nothing else for a whole semester than to weed out that particular kind of miscombined clauses, he would accomplish a great deal more than if he put the same amount of time on vague study of "unity in the sentence."

Though the "and" sentences may be more excusable in speaking than in writing, they are actually more dreaded in oral composition. The cause of the dread is not simply that the sentences are disagreeable, but that the "and" habit is more tyrannous in speech, is more likely to dominate a whole composition. As the student reads this chapter, he should have oral improvement in mind, though a printed page can present him only printed examples.

#### B. WAYS OF AVOIDING AND

We cannot rid ourselves of the bad habit simply by abstaining from an overworked conjunction; we must cultivate the other forms of making statements. That means, in the main, observing and imitating complex sentences.

Roosevelt once spoke a complex sentence of a hundred and ten words as a beginning of a speech at Chicago. He used thirty-nine words for praise of the state of Illinois, twenty-seven for saying what he wanted to preach, and forty-four for an added explanation of his subject. These three parts of the sentence are indicated by numerals.

(1) In speaking to you, men of the greatest city of the West, men of the State which gave to the country Lincoln and Grant, men who preëminently and distinctly embody all that is most American in the American character, (2) I wish to preach, not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife; (3) to preach that highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph.

*The Strenuous Life*

The sentence is far too long for imitation by students, but the simple methods of doing without *and* can easily be duplicated in school writing. Roosevelt did not secure unity by using *and*; he did not say, "I am speaking to men of the greatest city of the West, *and* that city is in the state which gave to the country Lincoln and Grant, *and* you are the men who preëminently embody all that is most American, *and* I do not wish to preach the doctrine of ignoble ease." Roosevelt began with a modifier, a prepositional phrase, thus avoiding one *and*. He uses three appositives for *you*, thus showing to all young Americans a device that will prevent a world of *ands*. When he has used the infinitive *to preach*, he does not say "*and* I wish to preach"; he lets that infinitive stand in apposition with the previous one. He does not use *and* or *but* for coupling together an aimless string of independent statements, but reserves those conjunctions for joining or contrasting two nouns, two adverbs, two phrases, two relative clauses.

In the following complex sentence Kipling does not show us a set of three coördinate remarks: "Their officers had forgotten, *and* they had made the soldiers stale, *but* they might have sup-



plied skirmishing drill." Directly after the subject he inserts a long modifying phrase grouped about the participle *forgetting*, follows this with the predicate, and after the predicate puts the modifying phrase "instead of marching and supplying." The numerals show the three parts: (1) subject and predicate, (2) modifier of the subject, (3) modifier of the principal verb.

(1) Their officers—(2) in the zeal of youth forgetting that the old soldiers who stiffened the sections must suffer equally with the raw material under hammering—(1) had made all a little stale and unhandy with continuous drill in the square, (3) instead of marching the men into the open and supplying them with skirmishing-drill.

A child's instinct is to say:

A great hull loomed out of the fog, *and* it swung around the point *and* I watched it, *and* I felt queer, *and* I wondered if I was "seeing things."

A student who is familiar with adverb clauses and participles could pack the five statements into one:

*While* I watched the great hull *as* it loomed out of the fog, *swing-*  
*ing* around the point, I felt *so* queer *that* I wondered if I was "seeing  
things."

We can avoid *and not* or *and no* by using *nor*. Many young Americans seem never to have noticed that *nor* can join two independent clauses; they instinctively say: "There was no cobweb, *and* I could *not* see any lint"; "I have no money in the bank, *and* there is *no* prospect that I shall have." The use of *nor* would produce:

There was no cobweb in the corners, *nor* could we see any lint under the bed.

I have no money in the bank, *nor* is there any prospect that I shall have a deposit within three months.

In these illustrations we have seen all the principal ways of avoiding *and*: (1) Some participle or gerund or infinitive may take the place of a superfluous subject and verb. (2) A preposi-

tional phrase may accomplish as much as an independent clause, especially if the object of the preposition is a gerund ("instead of *marching*"). (3) A noun in apposition—which may have many modifiers about it—tells as much as an *and*; infinitives may be in apposition; appositives are useful. (4) Instead of "and he" or "and it" the English language contains the relative pronouns *who*, *which*, and *that*. (5) There are noun clauses in our language. (6) It is possible to use the conjunction *nor*. (7) There are a great many adverb clauses in English which can indicate, as modifiers, when or where or how or a condition or a reason or a result. (8) Modifiers may come first in the sentence.

The guiding principle in avoiding *and* is not to spread out two or three topics, requesting the reader to assort them as he likes, but to present one thought. That "one thought" is the compass of sentence navigation.

### C. PROPER "AND" SENTENCES

How shall we read the compass when our course lies through an "and" sentence? By observing whether the two statements "combine to produce one effect." We shall now submit that formula to a severe test: we shall try it out with a passage\* from George Eliot (a bold and frequent user of *and*), a passage containing an unusually high percentage of "and" sentences, two consecutive pages describing a scene in childhood, where *and* would most naturally be used in a loose way. The author is speaking of two children, brother and sister, named Tom and Maggie.

The first apparent example of an *and* sentence is this:

It was Tom's step, then, that Maggie heard on the stairs, when her need of love had triumphed over her pride, *and* she was going down with her swollen eyes and disheveled hair to beg for pity.

The example is only apparent. By reading the two previous pages of the novel we learn that the *and* joins two *when* clauses:

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\* Pages 58 and 59 of *The Mill on the Floss*, Lake English Classic edition.

Maggie heard "*when* her need had triumphed and *when* she was going down." Authors do not use so many compound sentences as they appear to at first sight; *and* often joins two subordinate clauses or two verbs that belong to the one subject of a simple sentence.

The first real example is the fourth of a total of thirty sentences:

1. But she knew Tom's step, *and* her heart began to beat violently with the sudden shock of hope.

The second statement obviously combines with the first: because of Tom's approach her heart beat violently. This sentence is preceded in the novel by five rather long complex sentences, so that the reader welcomes the change of form.

After four more complex sentences and a rather long simple sentence the author says

2. Maggie and Tom were still very much like young animals, and so she could rub her cheek against his and kiss his ear in a random, sobbing way; *and* there were tender fibers in the lad that had been used to answer to Maggie's fondling, so that he behaved with a weakness quite inconsistent with, etc.

The *and so* means "therefore"; the next *and* joins two verbs; the third *and* is the only one that concerns us. The two statements are decidedly similar in meaning—why Maggie behaved in this way, why Tom responded in the same way; the two combine to produce the one effect of a reconciliation.

The eleventh sentence is marvelously compound:

3. Maggie's sobs began to subside, *and* she put out her mouth for the cake and bit a piece; *and* then Tom bit a piece, *and* they ate together and rubbed each other's cheeks, etc.

Can you guess why so learned and sensitive an author wrote such a series of *ands*? Her reason must have been peculiar, for the sentence has a childish sound. That very fact must be her reason: she wants to produce the effect of the actions of childhood. If you ever have a similar artistic purpose and feel that

you have skill to carry it out with three *ands*, try the maneuver. But realize the peril. You have been watching a curious trick performed by a practiced hand that seldom tried to duplicate the performance.

Nor should you be deceived by the seeming indifference with which the thirteenth sentence (at the beginning of a paragraph) swings from this day's sorrows to the next morning's joys.

4. So ended the sorrows of this day, *and* the next morning Maggie was trotting with her own fishing-rod in one hand—[33 more words].

We observe that the first independent clause is only a seven-word link with the previous paragraph and really amounts to no more than "after these sorrows"; it does not tangle itself up with the main thought, but introduces it.

The next two sentences describe Tom's knowledge of "worms, fish, and those things." Then comes:

5. Maggie thought this sort of knowledge was very wonderful—much more difficult than remembering what was in books; *and* she was rather in awe of Tom's superiority, for he was the only person who called her knowledge "stuff" and did not feel surprised at her cleverness.

Two remarks are in order about the *and*: (1) it is preceded by a semicolon, which shows that the second statement is of separate importance, not "another thing I happened to think of while I was scribbling along"; (2) the first clause tells of "how superior she thought his knowledge was," and the second clause carries us along with the same thought by telling of "how she stood in awe of this superiority." The two statements are similar in meaning and importance, so that they combine to produce the one effect: "why Maggie was in awe of Tom's knowledge."

The nineteenth sentence is:

6. They were on their way to the Round Pool—that wonderful pool, which the floods had made a long while ago: no one knew how deep it was; *and* it was mysterious, too, that it should be almost a perfect round, etc.

That use of *and* might never have occurred to George Eliot if she had not been subtly tincturing her style with childish

wonder; but, even so, it is properly employed, for it joins the mysterious depth to the mysterious roundness.

In the twentieth sentence *and* joins a statement about Tom's "good-humor" to a similar statement about his "amicable whispers," so that the two meanings blend into one.

7. The sight of the favorite old spot always heightened Tom's good-humor, *and* he spoke to Maggie in the most amicable whispers, as he opened the precious basket and prepared their tackle.

Of the next ten sentences not one is compound with *and*. In the whole thirty-sentence passage, chosen because it had an exceptionally high percentage of "and" sentences, less than one fourth are of that type.

#### D. BLUNDERS WITH *AND*

So much for an author's way of using *and*. We turn now to typical cases of amateur blunders.

1. I looked at my watch, *and* it was 8:55.

There is a bothersome change of subject from "I" to the impersonal "it." Though George Eliot changed from "the sight" to "he" (No. 7), she had put "Tom" before us in the first clause; even when she changes from "no one" to a noun clause (No. 6), the meaning does not shift, for we are told of a mystery in each clause. The boy who tells of looking at his watch has no such similarity of meaning; the two statements are not combined by *and*. In his sentence the important thought was the time, and so he should have subordinated the looking at the watch by saying "*when* I looked."

The second example illustrates the general probability indicated by the first one—namely, that a shift to "and it" or "and this" will split the meaning into two jagged fragments.

2. The fourth week was spent on the range, *and* to many of us *this* proved to be the most interesting period of the five weeks.

In literature we can find examples that seem similar to this. An author may, for example, wish to indicate that two statements

about a drug are of separate importance in bringing out his one thought: "Heroin is, however, a poison of a more insidious kind, *and it* is infinitely less useful in medicine." But that is a special need of an unusual kind. It is not an argument against the advice in this chapter; for the caution here urged so repeatedly is that an *and* used in this way is dangerous, that when so used by amateurs it is very likely to produce absurd lack of unity. That is a fact known by all teachers. That kind of sentence is so dangerous that experienced instructors are afraid to see it flourish in a composition. Unless a student is confident of artistic prowess, he will do much better to acquire a habit of writing this way: "The fourth week, spent on the range, proved to be for many of us the most interesting period." When a person can easily and habitually manipulate an appositive modifier like *spent*, then he may, after graduating from high school, feel free to experiment with "and it."

"I took, and I set out" shows the *and* of childhood, the *and* that tries to make one plus one equal one.

3. I took my gun, as I was always in the habit of doing, *and I* set out.

The mere omission of that last "I" would entirely alter the structure (as was said in Chapter XII, page 225). The *and* that joins two verbs in a simple sentence is well employed; the *and* that joins two independent clauses is a tricky workman.

A complete shift of subject and form of statement is more than likely to cause a gruesome accident. In the fourth example we find "*I think something*" coupled to "we will not be sorry."

4. I think we ought to learn to swim, *and* we will never be sorry for the effort this requires.

We might properly couple together in a compound sentence the two statements that "*we ought to learn*" and "we shall not be sorry." Why isn't it quite as easy and much safer to use two noun clauses? "I think that we ought to learn and that we shall never be sorry."

The fifth sentence contains a typical blunder—hooking an independent clause to a *which* clause by means of *and*.

5. Here the mixture is put into large steel bowls which revolve one way, *and* big paddle-wheels revolve another, thus thoroughly mixing it with air.

Inserting a *while* in place of *and* makes the whole tottering structure sturdy. *And* is a sentence-wrecker.

What two statements are joined by *and* in the next sentence?

6. Distilleries used about one sixth of our grain crop, *and* since prohibition has passed, you can see how much good has come of it by saving this grain.

So far as we can guess, the writer meant to say something like "Since distilleries used, we can see," or "Distilleries used, and hence we can see." By putting his trust in *and* he bungled.

If two pleasant odors are producing the same effect upon the same persons at the same moment, why should one be tucked into a prepositional phrase and the other be streaming through the air on the wings of *and*?

7. As soon as we enter the door, we are greeted with a refreshing odor of the essences of different fruits, *and* a whiff of chocolate streams through the air.

Why shouldn't we be greeted with two things—"with a refreshing odor *and* *with* a whiff that streams"?

The student can guess that we are seeing the symptoms of a weakness that lies deep in the mind. A mere little *and* could not cause all this destruction of unity. If *and* alone were responsible, the dullest person could save himself by a slight effort. The *and* that we see on the surface must indicate some difficulty far down in the brain. In truth it does. The difficulty is to sort out those ideas or statements that are really parallel in meaning, and to put them into parallel words. The subject of "parallelism" must be developed later (Chapter XVII, Section G). Here we glance at it as we examine the variety of ways in which *and* so persistently insists on forming improper compound sentences.

For some reason the untrained mind seems to be unaware of parallel structure. It likes to say that "one could see things," in the active voice, and then to say that "the other things could be seen," in the passive. And it infallibly makes this shift by building a disagreeable compound sentence.

8. Beyond this district one could see business houses and stores, *and* a little farther on could be seen many church steeples and school towers.

Why could the writer not have arranged two groups of objects of *could see*, joined by *and*? "One could see business houses and stores, and a little farther on many church steeples and school towers." Probably the girl who wrote the sentence was not sure of the simple principles of grammar; hence after saying "one could see" she felt unsafe unless she anchored herself once more with another subject and verb. The timid "and" sentence is often a symptom of a deep ignorance of grammar.

Sometimes an "and" sentence is caused by sheer forgetfulness of what we are about.

9. Thousands of acres of land, which now are not producing anything, will be cultivated, *and* the tractor will be used by every farmer to do the large amount of work in a shorter time.

Probably the writer intended to say: "The tractor will be used by every farmer to do the large amount of work in a shorter time, *and so will cause the cultivation of,*" etc.

Sometimes the *and* is a heedless substitute for *but*.

10. There are many—and in fact too many—who know nothing of the nature of hard work, *and* lots of these people will learn during the coming year.

Probably the writer meant "*but* these people will learn."

What was of importance to the writer of the eleventh sentence? What is a mere introduction to this important statement? Why did she join together two such unequal ideas by *and*?

11. As we were waiting, one of the girls happened to say something about a slip which must be presented before you could enter, *and* I remembered suddenly that I had not brought mine.



Would it be a prodigious feat for the average student to put one time-clause within the other? "When one of the girls, as we were waiting together, happened to say something about a slip (etc.), I suddenly remembered that I had not brought mine." If this is too much to ask of a writer who is planning a paragraph, we may at least suggest that a semicolon with *then* is preferable to a weak *and*.

The writer was a bright girl. If she cared to defend herself, she could hunt up in a school classic some compound sentence like this: "Then Kala Nag reached the crest of the ascent and stopped for a minute, *and* Little Toomai could see the tops of the trees lying all speckled and furry under the moonlight for miles and miles." If the discovery of this sentence in Kipling made her suspicious of the advice in this chapter, she could find all manner of "and" sentences in Stevenson and London; she could turn to the novels of the previous generation and gather examples from Dickens and Thackeray almost as fast as she could turn the pages; though her search would be very slightly rewarded in Carlyle or Ruskin or Hawthorne, she could quickly gather a dozen of loosely used *ands* in some of the *Spectator* papers. Many of these would seem not to differ greatly from the sentences that are so strongly objected to in this chapter. "What is the difference?" she would inquire. "How does a critic distinguish 'and I remembered' in my sentence from 'and Toomai could see' in Kipling's sentence? Could he really tell the difference if I slipped into my theme some loose 'and' sentences modeled like Kipling's?"

It is a fair question, deserving a frank answer. The critic could not always tell. He would detect and approve the skilled writer's *and* more often than the girl thinks, for there would be a purpose and a balance in the combination that would reveal the professional's ability. But the critic would sometimes fail; some of the "and" sentences written by the best authors might be objected to if they were copied into school compositions.

"Then," the student retorts, "it's right if an author does it,

but wrong if I do it. Teachers have one standard for an author and a higher standard for me."

No, the standard for the author is much higher. An author is required to keep a high level of excellence: he must always please us with variety and carry us along with force; in his composition an occasional loose *and* gives a change, freeing the style from too much formality; the general power elevates the "and" sentences. So in the case of a theme: if there is anything like prevailing force of style, no criticism will be made of an occasional *and* that is doing a doubtful duty; teachers will concede almost anything to a school writer who uses *and* for securing variety. To a considerable extent they have to judge *and* by its setting. In the midst of well-made simple and complex sentences an "and" sentence may be an artistic informality; whereas in the midst of a general welter of "and, and, and" the same structure may appear ill-made and gawky.

No form of training will produce such noticeable effects in oral composition as the resolute effort to speak without "and, and, and."

What teachers cannot tolerate, what they have to fight against perpetually, is the *and* that aimlessly and weakly causes monotony, the *and* that sleepily wanders into every other sentence, the *and* that only happens to go right, the habitual and tiresome *and*. This chapter is not written for the small fraction of a class that has artistic instincts and that uses *and* for variety's sake. The chapter is addressed to those who do not know that *and* is dangerous.

[The use of *and* after a semicolon and at the beginning of a sentence is explained in the next chapter, in connection with *but*, *so*, and *for*.]

### EXERCISES

Rewrite each sentence in the following list. If possible, make your revised form simple; if not, make it complex; if you cannot contrive either form, divide into two sentences that contain no

independent clauses joined by *and*. This is not entirely an exercise in improving sentences, for some of the revised forms may not be any better than the originals. This is an exercise in making sentences that are not compound with *and*.

Some of the forty sentences were written by authors of English classics, some by students; some are eminently respectable, and others are disreputable. The wording and phrasing have in a few cases been altered, so as to make the professionals' sentences less mature in sound and the amateurs' sentences more mature; but the structure is unchanged.

1. He gave a great sigh of satisfaction as he finally set foot on shore, and his exhaustion could be seen by all of us.

2. In this little cove the boy had set his net, and he had watched it eagerly for two hours.

3. Cynewulf dreamed that he saw a cross all covered with gold and silver, and there was blood running from it.

4. This place was a small café, and it was run by a very good-looking French girl and her old father.

5. Guillaume de Bermond, acknowledged to be the best swordsman in the shire, was a small, dapper youth, and alongside Chief Gilmour, the pride of the Herders, he appeared insignificant.

6. As Carl forced his way forward, the large body of his antagonist seemed to hang for a second, and then with one vain effort to regain his foothold he tumbled over the precipice, to be dashed to pieces on the rocks many hundred feet below.

7. So he mounted the motorcycle, and in a few minutes he was out of sight.

8. She looked in the glass, and Bert still laughed and clapped his hands.

9. There is plenty of "know-how," though, about writing magazine articles, and clever people get so skilful that it is often hard to tell whether they are really sincere or not.

10. Then he starts to read the note aloud, and it contains these comforting words for Lydia: "I'll surely see you."

11. All people have their superstitions, and I have heard her say, confidentially, that she is afraid to walk under a ladder.

12. Upon his first rising the audience grew quiet, and a general whisper ran among the country people that something different was going to be said.

13. The news of his marriage came to her, and it killed her.

14. These are just a few of the many things which a young officer has to know, and, to be sure, a boy who has given up his college work and his summer vacation that he may serve his country deserves no little credit.

15. Only girls under college age belong, and there every Saturday morning for an hour and a half they knit and talk.

16. Another picture is called "The Milkmaid," by Greuze, and it shows a young girl leaning against the sturdy neck of a cow.

17. She led me into the drawing-room and told me to lie down on a couch, and a servant brought in some iodine for my bruises.

18. It was now about eight o'clock at night, and the captain ordered supper immediately, thinking I had already fasted too long.

19. Bob nodded to his uncle to read it out loud, and those who could not understand English, as well as those who could, listened.

20. "You have had a good look at the crowd now," said the old man, "and if you will crawl around this corner, so as to be out of sight, I will tell you a story about them."

21. Bursts of laughter arise from a group of young people as they gayly talk together after a hot and tiresome tennis match or round of golf, or an automobile ride which has clogged their throats, and they have come to be relieved.

22. Many of these petty gentry have come to visit my little abode, and I have talked with a considerable number of them.

23. I was more than a match for him at this game, and he went on to his next customer no wiser than he came.

24. My old room was quite large, and I used to share it with a roommate, and consequently it had a large carpet in the center.

25. He comes, like Gulliver, from among his little people, and he can't meet you on the square.

26. I have been studying the subject, and there are several steps that must be taken before planting a garden.

27. Prince jumped sideways and tried to run in, but the quick little collie snapped at his shoulder, and he had to jump over the collie, and the collie's head followed his heels close.

28. He opened his stationery shop at eight o'clock, and his first customer was a commuter.

29. Well, the wind has gone down again, and I am in my place once more, with an accompaniment of dripping rain on the veranda.

30. I am more easily flattered than you are, and your pretty compliment is very welcome.

31. Are your rakes and hoes in good order, and are you in good trim, your sleeves well up to the elbow, and your breath good?

32. She is very fat, and my chum is always making jokes about this peculiarity.

33. Tonight he is chairman of the meeting, and he will tell all his glorious thoughts in his introductory remarks.

34. The jackies seem to realize what is being done for them, and by their efforts and those of the camp authorities gambling and bad habits should be entirely wiped out.

35. That was the way I put the case to them, and they at once saw my point.

36. He asked for a maple sundae, and as she couldn't supply him from the little fountain, the brutal fellow dashed down the box of candy and left the store.

37. This was my first attempt at painting, and although it served my purpose, it was far from perfect; in one place it was too thick, and in another it was too thin.

38. Without a great deal of sensitiveness Keats could not have been poetical, and throughout his life the coarse ridicule of his opponents stung and tore him.

39. Here they sat down, and with a laborious effort at a jesting mood, Slazer told the same humorous story.

40. The summer is of course the best season for agriculture, and in addition many men take a few weeks' vacation which they can spend in this way.

## CHAPTER XV

### OTHER COMPOUND SENTENCES

#### A. CARELESS USE OF *But*

A compound sentence is formed by adding together two or more independent clauses. These may be joined by semicolons, no conjunctions being used. The most common and most abused sort of compound sentence is the one in which the clauses are joined by *and*. The two types have already been treated. Next in order of commonness is the kind in which two clauses are contrasted by *but*.

There is no need of a whole chapter for the discussion of "but" sentences. Indeed there are only two cautions that require emphasis. The first is "Be sure that you really mean *but*." Just as there is a tendency among students to use *however* as a meaningless link, so there is a tendency to slip in *but* without considering whether the sentence demands the meaning "on the contrary."

He was an ugly old bulldog, *but* he dearly loved to swim after the sticks that we threw into the water.

What contrast is there between being ugly and loving to chase sticks? Teachers frequently encounter these sham contrasts and write in the margin of the theme, "Why use *but*?" The reason is sometimes impossible to diagnose, but often a teacher can see that in the student's mind there was a legitimate contrast, that the student was thinking rationally, but that he selected the wrong parts of his thought to set down on paper. For example, the boy who wrote about the bulldog may have thought thus: "He was an ugly old bulldog [he looked so surly and mean that you would never have supposed he could be the least bit playful; *but* strangely enough he was decidedly playful]; he loved to swim after sticks." So, again, a person may have a chain of thought

like this: "A heavy rain was approaching [the first drops had already fallen; you might suppose that we were afraid of being soaked through; *but* we weren't afraid at all, because] an old barn stood a hundred yards down the road." If this person is careless, he may omit all the central links and write the two ends:

A heavy rain was approaching, *but* an old barn stood a hundred yards down the road.

If we read

For half an hour we watched the old mason, *but* he worked very slowly,

we can see no reason for *but*; there is no contrast between our watching and his working slowly. Perhaps we can guess from the rest of the theme that the writer means: ["We wanted to see whether the mason would notice that we had diluted his mortar; so] for half an hour we watched him, *but* he worked so slowly [that we couldn't wait long enough to find out.]"

If we read

Algebra comes at 10:15, *but* physics is one hour later,

we give up; there is no guessing why *but* was used.

The word *but* has a definite meaning; if it is carelessly placed between two clauses that are not contrasted in thought, it makes a reader wonder what is wrong with the writer's mind.

The second caution about *but* is that it is used too much. A *but* always turns up the other side of a thought; if we say too frequently to a reader, "But now see the other side; *but* now go back to the first view," he feels that he is being jerked about and shaken up. Especially is this true if two *buts* occur in quick succession. Two within one sentence can be found in literature, but only the greatest ingenuity can succeed with such a pair. If we need a number of contrasts within a paragraph, we can have them without using *but*. A possibility that many amateurs seldom consider is the use of *though* and *although*, forming a subordinate clause at the beginning of a sentence.

*Though* you would have felt sure that he was a surly dog, he really had a lot of fun in him.

*Although* the mob looked happy and careless enough to me, the policeman assured us that serious trouble was brewing and that we had better hurry along.

There is another substitute—a short word, common, easy, known even by illiterate people—which never, for months at a stretch, finds its way into the compositions of some students. The general neglect of this handy little word is one of the curiosities of a theme-reader's life. The word is *yet*.

It is familiar, *yet* they seldom employ it.

It is a plain and natural word, *yet* amateurs, by an unaccountable whim, invariably prefer the pedantic "however."

#### B. THE INDEPENDENCE OF *For*

A kind of compound sentence may be formed with *for*. As ordinarily used in school writing this conjunction forms a subordinate clause that gives the reason as a modifier of the principal verb.

He ought to give more, *for* he is wealthy.

The meaning can hardly be distinguished from that of *because* or *as*, which are always subordinating. But *for* is more like "and this is the reason why"; it is more independent; its independence is shown by the fact that it is frequently used after a semicolon or at the beginning of a sentence. Its effect in a sentence is often to add an almost coordinate idea; it is more likely than other conjunctions to betray us into writing a trailing sentence of three independent units. In the following example Stevenson uses *for* to connect the two principal members of his sentence, the second member being a pair of clauses connected by *and still*:

In one way, indeed, he bade fair to ruin us; *for* he kept on staying week after week, and at last month after month, so that all the money had been long exhausted, and still my father never plucked up the heart to insist on having more.



## C. THE EXTRAORDINARY AND DEADLY SO

1. **The tyranny of *so*.** The word *so* has only recently become a subordinating conjunction. It is so independent a connective that it may begin a sentence. It must be discussed in a chapter on compound sentences because its effect is so likely to be that of adding a coördinate clause, and therefore to betray us into a "three-unit" sentence.

It is an extraordinary word. It has all the vitality of the brown rat; it has a long and honorable pedigree, yet is the most plebeian of words; though the *Century Dictionary* says that as a conjunction it is obsolete, it is as common in modern school life as potato-bugs in July; used by professionals as a stately adverb for introducing an occasional sentence, it is used by students as a mean and common drudge for tagging something to the end of a sentence. *So* is such an important word that four of the *Century's* huge columns are devoted to it. Not contented with this power and preëminence, *so* is forever extending its domain; against the armies of the allied lexicographers, grammarians, editors, and teachers it makes continued advances in our periodical literature. In the spoken English of most untrained persons it reigns tyrannically. In written composition it is an evil as dreaded as opium used to be in China, for it lulls the user to sleep, robs him of will-power, and makes him a helpless addict of "so, so, so, so."

Let the following paragraph bear witness. It was written by a tenth-grade student who was above the average in ability, who had for two years been specially trained to avoid *so*, and who was as astonished as his teacher to find what his drugged mind had produced.

One day Cooper read a novel written by an English author. He thought the book was a very poor one, SO he said that he thought he could write as good a one, if not a better one. His wife told him to try, SO he wrote a novel called *Precaution*. The setting was in England, SO Cooper knew little about it. The novel wasn't a very good one. However, as it was anonymous, people thought that it had

come from England. This gave Cooper confidence, SO with the backing of a few friends he continued his literary career.

The paragraph about Cooper was *written*. If students are thus in the power of *so* when it stares them in the face from the page, we can imagine what some dictaphone records of oral composition would reveal.

A generation ago *so* was generally thought of as an independent adverb (meaning "accordingly" or "therefore as a result"). It was not a very common word. Writers sometimes lived for days without using it once. When they felt the need of an occasional *so*, they put it at the beginning of a sentence, or at least after a semicolon. If, for example, we look through the first chapter of *Tom Sawyer* (published in 1876), the *so* after a comma is not to be found. Here is the utmost freedom of colloquial style, with all manner of free-and-easy compound sentences; yet the author and Tom and his aunt get along for eight pages without the *so* after a comma. Four sentences begin with *so*; one contains *and so*.

Yet long before Mark Twain's time *so* was making headway. In 1854 Lowell wrote: "But I did not like to be taken for a city gent, *so* I told him I was born and bred in the country." Little did Lowell dream of the future tyranny of the unobtrusive syllable that thus slipped in after a comma; he knew it as an occasional, conversational hook that authors played with once in a while to relieve the formality of "therefore." If he had been writing formally he would have done one of three things: (1) used *so that*, (2) used *and so*, (3) used a semicolon.

*So* was resolved to be free from these limitations. It hated to be coupled with *that*. It knew that in the history of English idioms other conjunctions had once been shackled with *that*—for example "when *that* I was," "where *that* a temple stood," "for *that* his money was spent"; it therefore determined to be rid of *that*. It hated to be *and so*; it wanted to stand alone. It hated to be fenced off with a semicolon. The ambition of *so* was to stand alone as a universal conjunction of result. Nowadays

it is extending even this freedom, contriving to get itself used without so much as a comma. It has gone farther, spreading out over the whole province of purpose, cleverly killing the competition of *that*, *in order that*, *so that*, or infinitives of purpose. By 1920 it had established a complete supremacy over the minds of all American students, obliging them to write like this:

It was growing dark *so* I asked for a light.

He needed capital *so* he could extend his business.

They torture themselves *so* they can get used to pain.

It hurt *so* I had to yell.

The dial was adjusted *so* it would set off the sprinklers.

Their senses have been so blunted by the fumes of *so* that they cannot tell whether they mean "with the result" or "in order that" or "to such an extent that" or "in such a way that": they make some statement, add on something with *so*, and let the meaning take care of itself.

2. Escaping from tyranny. It may be that "the universal *so*" is an established idiom. Perhaps *so* is an invincible despot to whom we must all bow down. But if only careless and lazy minds are subjugated, if self-reliant people are still scornful of the pretensions of *so*, then it is the duty of every teacher and every textbook to warn young people of the tyranny to which they are sleepily yielding obedience. Here are a few ways of escaping from the "so" slavery.

a. **So for degree.** Usually the *so* can be put before the word it modifies; it can always be followed by *that*.

It was growing *so* dark *that* I asked for a light.

He was *so* exasperated *that* he couldn't speak.

b. **So for manner.** The *so* can be put before the word it modifies; it can be followed by *that*.

The dial was *so* adjusted *that* it would set off the sprinklers.

Finally matters were *so* arranged *that* I could have a room by myself.

c. **So that for purpose.** Students of today seem to hesitate about writing, "I need capital, *so that* I can extend my business."

If you can use *so that* with a comma, do it by all means. If you find the expression difficult, try these:

for extending my business  
to extend my business  
in order to extend my business

Does some entirely different device occur to you? You may remember that a sentence need not always begin with a subject and verb.

If I am to extend my business, I must have capital.

d. *So for result.* Using *so* after a comma to show result is the great plague, the cancer that spreads its fibers everywhere and saps the vigor of sentences. People who are weakened by a habit of beginning with the subject and verb are easy victims of *so*. Their minds become subject to the hallucination that every proposition is of this type:

Something happened, *so* something else happened.

It is an observed fact in composition of the eighth and ninth grades that pupils, if left to their own devices, fill their themes with sentences which say that "This was true, *so* that was true." If they are required to begin with modifiers, the *so* cancer is killed. It will not live in sentences that begin with a subordinate clause or a phrase.

*As* I felt dizzy, I sat down for a minute.

*Since* it may rain, we had better take slickers.

*Because* of the jam of traffic I was afraid I might miss the train.

We may avoid the *so* of result even if we cannot begin with a modifier. There is no absolute necessity of saying, "I was well supplied, *so* I said nothing." Other possibilities are:

I was well supplied, *and so* said nothing.

I was well supplied; I didn't have to speak.

I was well supplied. Why should I say anything?

## D. THE DANGERS OF COÖRDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

An editor in his sanctum or an author in his study would wonder why a textbook must devote all this space to an insignificant two-letter conjunction. In the same way an athlete might not understand why a scientist should be so concerned about a microscopic germ. The scientist would tell him: "This is a disease; it is rapidly spreading; it is a deadly foe of humanity." Teachers cannot be amused at the humorous antics of a tiny *so*, for they know that the germ is virile, infecting every school in the country, and causing the sleeping-sickness in composition. This is not a matter of one word, nor even of a set of objectionable idioms; it is a case of a disease that robs the whole composition of its strength. *So* is a poison which deadens the senses and weakens the will. Experienced theme-readers know that the frequent *so* is an evidence of flabby physique. A writer will never be in rugged health until he feels perfectly comfortable without *so*.

Now that we have sufficiently exposed the peril, we may remark that *so* would not be an evil if it were used once in a while for variety. No more would the free-and-easy "and" sentence be objected to in themes if it came only occasionally. These fearsome foes are dangerous, not when students use them sometimes for a purpose, but when students are constantly used by them. Since indolent minds are enslaved by these and other types of the compound sentence, all students who place much reliance on coördinating conjunctions are suspected of mental incapacity. The student who cannot frequently and naturally convert his compound ideas into a complex sentence is accused of weakness. Schools have to require that themes shall be proofs of mental strength. Just as an evidence of mental vigor—if there were no other reason—school writers must show that they can express themselves without the aid of *and*, or *so*, or the indefinite *but*, or the *for* that converts a "company" of two clauses into a "crowd" of three independent ideas.

How strong and independent coördinating conjunctions are is seen in the fact that they are often used for beginning sentences. Authors who, like Carlyle and Hawthorne, are wary of *and* or *but* with a comma use them frequently after semicolons or periods. Look at four examples from one page of *The House of the Seven Gables*.\*

"Poor and forsaken as we are, some pew-door will be open to us." So Hepzibah and her brother made themselves ready.

"We have no right . . . anywhere but in this old house . . . which, therefore, we are doomed to haunt. *And*, besides," he continued, with a fastidious sensibility, etc.

They shrank back into the dusty passageway and closed the door. *But*, going upstairs again, they found the whole interior, etc.

At the threshold they felt his pitiless gripe upon them. *For* what other dungeon is so dark as one's own heart!

Hawthorne uses *so* to mean "therefore as a result of what has been completely said in the previous sentences." By *and* he means "in addition to the thought that I have already expressed." His *but* brings out the contrast, not simply between the two statements that we see here, but between two of his paragraphs. The *for* means "the truth of the previous statement will be proved in this sentence."

Beginning a sentence properly with *and* is somewhat of a logical task, for it means that the entire thought of one statement is truly supplementary to the thought of another. So a *but* at the beginning certifies that all of the sentence is a real contrast to all of the previous sentence. The mind of the writer has to take an inventory of the whole content of each, and has to judge whether the second is a supplement of the first or a contrast with it. Because of the difficulty of linking two sentences in this way, and because failures are so frequent, some schools will not permit the attempt and make a rule that sentences must never begin with *and* or *but*. This is an illustration of a truth which rhetoric teachers must frequently repeat: What authors do may not be a safe model for high-school writers.

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\* Lake English Classic edition, page 203.

The professional skill that handles coördinating conjunctions with such apparent recklessness may deceive the amateur. An easy-going reliance upon the compound sentence is like a child's confidence in matches or dynamite or arsenic. A coördinating conjunction is a dangerous thing. If not used discreetly and temperately, *and* or *but* or *so* may set a composition on fire with absurdity or poison it by giving the wrong meaning.

And yet this chapter is not intended to frighten or worry anyone. It is meant to warn careless young writers of the perils of sleepiness—and of course we can't wake up drowsy people unless we are rather loud and emphatic. For the careful and wide-awake student the chapter will have no terrors. He will find it a set of useful cautions about the perils of the compound sentence.

[Exercises for Chapter XV are given after Chapter XVI.]

## CHAPTER XVI

### SUBORDINATION IN SENTENCES

#### A. WHAT "SUBORDINATION" MEANS

Thoughts naturally come to the mind as a series of statements:

1. A cannery was put up a few years ago.
2. This made the location of the old summer hotel unpleasant.
3. But many of the old-time guests have grown fond of the place.
4. So they keep on coming to it.
5. And so it is still profitable to the owner.
6. And the owner's name is Perkins.

That series of statements would convey the information to a real-estate agent who wants particulars. If a child in the fifth grade set down such a row of sentences in that logical sequence, he might have credit for writing well; perhaps not much fault would be found with them in the seventh grade; but in the ninth they would not be acceptable. They are not "composed"—that is, they are not fitted together as parts of a whole. To pack all those thoughts into one sentence would be beyond the power of seventh-grade pupils; few in the ninth grade would do better than something like the following unless they had been trained in the use of the complex sentence:

The old summer hotel is not pleasantly located, for a cannery has been put up near it, but still many of the old guests keep coming to it because they are fond of it, so it is still profitable to the owner; his name is Perkins.

Such a wandering compound form is not composed. We cannot frame a real sentence out of these materials until we select some statement as a central one and group the others about it. We must decide which thought we wish to emphasize and must make the other thoughts subordinate to that.



It is conceivable that a writer might want to emphasize the name of the owner; it is barely possible that he might need to emphasize "unpleasantly located"; but under ordinary circumstances the important idea is "still profitable." All the other statements seem to lead up to that. The framework of the one thought is: "Though the location is unpleasant, yet the hotel continues to be profitable." In each of these clauses there is an explanatory idea: "why the location is unpleasant," "why the hotel continues to be profitable."

Although the location of the hotel has been made unpleasant by a cannery that has been put up near it, so many of the old guests who have grown fond of the place still keep coming to it that the owner, whose name is Perkins, still makes a profit.

That is not an elegant sentence, nor even a good model for imitation; it is useful only as an illustration of subordinating ideas. (Possibly some of the exercises at the end of this chapter will result in structures of this kind—not admirable, hardly normal, but well worth while as preliminary drill in reducing a mass of statements to some kind of organized unit.) When we have learned how easy it is to go through the motions of subordinating three statements to the fourth statement, then we can answer the next question: Is it worth while to have so many subordinate clauses?

Surely there is no need of a clause to give the name of the owner. It may not be necessary to say that a cannery "has been put up"; how else could it get there? Nor is there any need of the whole clause "who have grown fond"; perhaps some one adjective can take the place of it. Perhaps we could arrange to have *guests* the subject of two verbs.

Although the new cannery near the hotel has made the location unpleasant, many devoted old guests still patronize the owner, Jabez Perkins, and bring a profit to his place.

There is only one subordinate clause left. If we care to, we can get rid of that by using a prepositional phrase.

In spite of the unpleasantness of having the new cannery near the hotel, etc.

The six independent statements have been reduced to one simple sentence. Any similar set of little sentences could be composed in the same fashion by subordinating certain parts.

Such a "boiling down" process may not be desirable in writing, and is certainly not demanded in speech. An audience may prefer to have details spread out. If a reader is entirely unfamiliar with the situation, he may be better satisfied with a whole theme devoted to explaining that one statement that the guests were fond of the Perkins House. It is all a question of proportion, of emphasis. What is more, a writer who continually subordinated two or three thoughts in each sentence would have an unnatural style—a compressed, juiceless, monotonous style. A continual effort to pack ideas into small compass would wrinkle and distort a composition. Probably this dissertation on the Perkins House would be more natural and effective if spread out in two sentences, one of which is compound. The purpose of this chapter is not to teach that simple and complex sentences are always of necessity better than compound sentences.

#### B. DEVICES FOR SUBORDINATING

The point of the chapter is that high-school composition, oral or written, is nearly worthless unless it shows some power to subordinate ideas, that a theme must contain a considerable proportion of sentences in which ideas are subordinated, and that the best way to avoid a childish style is to become familiar with the better types of simple and complex sentences—the kinds in which there must be subordinate ideas. These are the ones that teachers have to foster, even to the extent of discouraging the short and the compound sentences. What gives variety and maturity to style is the complex and the longer simple sentences. That is the one great fact that has been held up to view in the four previous chapters. We are trying to shake ourselves free

from an artless, careless habit, and to cultivate new habits of forming sentences that contain the different sorts of subordinated parts.

We have seen that a noun or an adjective may take the place of a subject and verb. Instead of saying, "His name has been mentioned a great many times, so I looked him up in *Who's Who*," we may write:

The constant mention of that name drove me to *Who's Who*.

We have frequently heard that the tiresome compound effect can be avoided by making one noun the subject of two verbs. We do not need to say that "I was concerned, *but I could not help smiling.*"

I was secretly concerned to see human nature in so much wretchedness and disgrace, but at the same time could not forbear smiling to hear Sir Roger advising her, as a justice of the peace, to avoid all communication with the devil and never to hurt any of her neighbor's cattle.

There is a simple sentence of fifty words, built by using a pair of verbs for one subject, six verbal nouns, and five prepositions.

Verbal adjectives, if used with caution, are a convenient substitute for a clause.

The newspapers printed a *forged* document *signed* "Renovator" and *representing* the alderman as *corrupting* elections and *associating* with thugs.

Sir Roger, in the next place, laid his hand upon Edward III's sword, and, *leaning* upon the pommel of it, gave us the whole history of the Black Prince.

Though active participles like *leaning* are common in school use, passive participles are rare. They may well be cultivated.

This was a fountain, *set* round with a rim of old mossy stones and *paved* in its bed with a sort of mosaic work of variously *colored* pebbles.

The old schooner, *said* to have been built in 1877, and *known* to be at least thirty years old, is now a hulk in Mill Cove.

Adjectives may modify in this same appositive way. Try to use occasionally an arrangement like this:

The view from his prairie home, so *dreary* and yet so *peaceful*, was ever in the thoughts of the wounded lad.

Nouns, pronouns, infinitives, noun clauses—all sorts and conditions of word-groups—may be used as appositives for subordinating ideas.

His mother had always seemed to him a homely little figure in the background—*someone to be spoken to politely, but otherwise of no special importance.*

During the epidemic our district showed its superiority over the rest of the city, both in the prompter reporting of cases and in a lower death rate—*less than half that of the city's average.*

The little fellow had one consuming ambition: *to drop a baseball from the top of the Washington Monument.*

He dreaded to hear the alarm-clock in the morning, *to be roused to another day of uncertain fear and weary delay.*

Dozens of varied appositives may be seen in any magazine; they ought to appear sometimes in themes.

Though the world is full of good simple sentences in which a subordinate idea appears as a prepositional phrase at the beginning, young people have to be urged to use this form.

*At the present time* about four million people in New York City live in tenements.

*Against this motion*, made by a fellow of our own society, I protest with all my might.

Only a moment's thought, only a trifling exercise of will-power, is required to begin with *against*; yet people who have an active desire to subordinate their ideas find it difficult, especially in oral composition, to get away from "This motion is made, *but* I protest against it." The phrase *in spite of* is perfectly easy to manage if a person needs to avoid an extra *but*; instead of "We were willing, *but* it" we could occasionally use

*In spite of our willingness* it was impossible to follow his reasoning.

Phrases—many of them—can often be so put together as to

form stanch and solid statements, for variety among complex and compound sentences.

The gift of half a million dollars to his native town by the will of Ralph D. Owens furnishes a remarkable example of the possession of great wealth by men little known *outside of* their own small business acquaintance.

The attempt to manufacture long simple sentences, by ingeniously fitting together prepositions and appositives and verbals, will not result happily. But thinking of the possibilities and using them when they occur naturally will most decidedly improve compositions. Many able students have never attempted a simple sentence like the following:

From Hongkong the transport headed south, reeling off her three hundred miles a day, toward Manila.

Some of the best minds in our schools have been accustomed by lifelong habit to the compound form beginning with subject and verb: "The transport headed south from Hongkong, *and it* reeled off three hundred miles a day." If the ears of a writer could hear the monotony of that type, if his eyes could see the sameness, he would make the slight effort required to subordinate some ideas in simple sentences.

He would wish to do himself justice by subordinating ideas in complex sentences. By an excessive use of compound forms he represents himself as an immature person, of slight mental power, who is unable to arrange modifiers. "He is *unable* to subordinate anything" must be the judgment of an audience or a reader; "for, of course, if he could, he would." The weakness is deeper, and is far more serious, than the mere matter of the form of individual sentences. If a student has never caught the idea that statements are very different in importance, he will display an uninteresting fact in an entire sentence, tuck away an important statement in a phrase, and contrast as of equal value a penny and a tornado; he will use space for unessential little happenings, and so will fail to make his tragedy or comedy stand out.

## C. THEMES THAT LACK SUBORDINATION

This description of a train-wreck is a study in failure to subordinate.

(1) As I was returning home from school, I had quite an interesting experience. (2) It was about two years ago at the end of the summer term. (3) I had a rather long journey to make by train, so I decided to take the night express. (4) I got a berth, and soon after the train pulled out of the station I was in it and asleep. (5) About one o'clock I woke up and found that the train was standing still. (6) At the same time I heard a good deal of noise outside, talking and shouting, so I began to get curious. (7) Finally I got up, dressed, and went out. (8) When I left the train, it was pitch dark, but I could see a crowd of people up at the head of the train, as they were either in the beam of the headlight or were lit up by the trainmen's lamps. (9) I hurried along toward them, but when I got near I had no need to ask what the trouble was. (10) A freight train had been wrecked. (11) The box-cars were lying on their sides, all their contents lying jumbled around, and more iron was strewed around than I knew a freight train had. (12) All this was lit up by our engine's headlight, so that quite a weird effect was produced.

(13) The trainmen had seen that it would take a good many hours to clear the wreck in order that our train might proceed, so they had telegraphed ahead. (14) The authorities then made up another train and sent it back. (15) After changing trains we proceeded, but we arrived at our destination about five hours late.

Through the first four sentences we get the impression that all thoughts are alike to this writer, and that he has no power over them: if they float through his mind in a certain order, down they go on paper in that order; if too many of them come along, he omits every other one; if they choose to scamper up helter-skelter, he cannot assign them to their places. For example, along comes that bright-looking thought, "I had an interesting experience," and demands a place in the first sentence; yet it is impertinent and dangerous. The whole purpose of the theme is to show how the experience was interesting; to slip in this statement anywhere is a risk, but to put it among the time items is the opposite of subordination. The other thoughts that straggle along as they please are:

I was returning from school.  
It was in the fall two years ago.  
I had a long journey to make by train.  
I took the night express.  
I got a berth.  
I was soon asleep.

If a short theme is to describe an exciting train-wreck, what does a reader care about "two years ago, summer term, long journey, reason for traveling at night, getting a berth, train pulling out"? All these particulars are trifling, irrelevant; they are certainly not worthy of more than one sentence, and could easily be tucked in as modifiers in an opening sentence that tells about being waked up.

Two years ago, as I was returning home from school on the night express, I woke up about one o'clock.

Why did the writer take the night express? If the information were important, how could we guess at it from the third sentence? A *long* journey can be made just as rapidly by daylight; therefore Sherlock Holmes could argue that length was not the reason. Perhaps the writer wanted to avoid the tedium of a *daylight* journey. We don't know. This student can only say, "so." He is also at the mercy of *and*. "I got a berth, *and* soon *I* was in it," he says. Of course he does, for he has never noticed that there is in the universe such an operation as subordinating. If the two thoughts were useful to a reader, which would deserve to be independent? The answer is serviceable in almost every paragraph we write, for it applies to all manner of sentences. Whatever is customary, habitual, taken for granted, does not deserve special mention. If a person spent the night in a coach, that might be worth a sentence; if he forced his way into a sleeping-car without securing a berth, that unusual performance would deserve—oh, a theme could be written on that one topic. That is extraordinary. But "I got a berth" is almost like informing us that "I was breathing with my lungs." We take the lungs and the berth for granted. We take it for granted that the

writer did not miss the train—for if he had missed it, that would be another story. Going to sleep must be the main idea.

Soon after the train pulled out of the station, I was asleep.

This minute dissection of sentences may mislead the student in one way. No one of these sentences is, by itself, worth finding fault with so severely. Constructions much like number four can be found in easy-going passages of literature. That one sentence does not condemn the writer. He is at fault because his general style—sentence after sentence after sentence—is strung out without attempt at subordination of some ideas. If the three statements previous to this one and the three after it had been compact, it might have passed without notice.

So the fifth sentence, unobjectionable in other surroundings, contributes here to the general feeling that everything this theme contains is built on the “and, but, so” pattern. Number six starts promisingly; there is actually a prepositional phrase at the beginning and a pair of gerunds in apposition with *noise*. We think the writer will redeem himself. Not at all. After all this strain of subordinating, his strength fails; he must resort to *so* once more. He very likely knew about the Chinese torture of dropping water on the victim’s head: one drop causes no discomfort; the series of similar drops causes madness, and finally death. A compound form causes no discomfort—may be refreshing; the series of similar unsubordinated thoughts produces weariness, and finally disgust.

Still this composition is not all torture. The seventh sentence furnishes variety of a good sort; the eighth begins with a *when* clause. Then comes that compound drop again: “It was dark, *but* I could see, *as* they were.” We take the darkness for granted, and we have already left the car in sentence seven. What we want to hear is:

Up at the head of the train I could see a crowd of people in the beam of the headlight or lit up by the trainmen’s lanterns.

The ninth sentence proves for the sixth time that the writer is at the mercy of a rabble of thoughts: “I hurried along, *but*



I had no need to ask." He would explain quickly enough if he were on a witness-stand that "as he hurried along *he could not imagine what the trouble was*, but when he got near he had no need to ask." While he was writing, the thoughts scrambled for the places; an important one was crowded out altogether; two unequal and unlike thoughts were paired with a *but*. In the eleventh sentence *and* couples together a participial phrase and an independent clause; in the twelfth the important idea is hooked on subordinately by *so that* to an unimportant main clause; in the thirteenth *so* drops upon us once more; in the fifteenth our endurance is exhausted by another blow from *but*: "We had been delayed by a wreck, *but* the delay amounted to five hours."

The writer who cannot subordinate thoughts in sentences cannot arrange the parts of his whole theme according to their importance: one third is approaching the wreck; one fourth is receding from it. If he can acquire the habit of noticing relative importance, he can write a readable theme. There is nothing wrong with his mental powers. He has simply failed to require his mind to be alert.

Every ordinary student can require himself to notice what he is about as he frames his sentences. He need have no fear of that formidable new term "subordination." In practice it means no more than "watch your step when you are making sentences."

Some professional writers subordinate their thoughts and vary the forms while they write. They are uneasy if they feel disorder or laxness, and so construct each sentence as they wish it to stand permanently. Other writers prefer to do one task at a time; they keep their attention on the general structure of the paragraph, allowing thoughts to go on to paper without assigning every one to its place; then they revise, attending in detail to sentence-structure. We cannot say that one method is better than another. We can say that an untrained writer had better revise his sentences after his composition is completed.

In this recombining and subordinating of thoughts we cannot rely on any one or two handy devices. Students who are unused to the complex sentence see that they can often subordinate an idea by a *when* clause; in the next theme, therefore, one third of the sentences may begin with *when*. *After* is a word more easily and more monotonously employed. Another variety-killer is *as*. To get rid of a *so* by beginning one sentence with *as* is commendable; to begin four sentences in one theme with *since* is not much of an improvement (see "Building a Cabin," page 77). The substitutes for *so* and *but* must be various.

#### D. THEMES IN WHICH IDEAS ARE SUBORDINATED

We need not turn to English classics for illustration of well-managed thoughts. High-school writers furnish excellent examples. In the following set of varied forms the three "and we" sentences and the "so" sentence are pleasant enough. The theme was written without revision, exactly as it stands here, by a girl who had just completed the eleventh grade. She kept the whip-hand of her ideas as she went along, producing sentence-variety naturally and easily.

"The best parlor"—how quickly a picture comes to my mind: a gloomy room with the shades drawn; large-flowered wall-paper; a spindle-legged table with a book of photographs, a Bible, and a blue china vase on the worn plush cover, and standing in the mathematical center of the room; six straight-backed chairs along the wall, lace tidies hanging over their backs; and besides these, two footstools. Of course the mantelpiece bears the gilt clock with the elaborate design, but we hear no ticking. Two nondescript ornaments flank the time-piece on right and left.

Our eyes rise to the ceiling, and we dimly discern a painted design in many colors. We turn our attention to the floor and see what could be a magnified, clarified reflection of the above—more patterns on a green surface. Between the two windows there is a stand with a glass globe containing what seems at first to be a mass of stone. As we approach, the small village and its inhabitants take definite forms, and we see the miniature town in its full Sunday array. A small card bears the inscription: "Carved and set up by Jonathan

Winkle, 1863." Turning from this remembrancer of the past, we notice the large oil painting of a soldier hanging near the door we entered. The uniform is strangely unfamiliar, so we suppose he lived long, long ago. In fact everything speaks to us in the language of the past, and we feel vaguely uncomfortable in a "best parlor."

The talent for whipping thoughts into their proper places is not peculiar to girls. Here is the work of a tenth-grade boy—one who had not distinguished himself for cleverness in English. The sentences in his first draft were almost the same as these of his second draft.

Take two glasses of water—one filled with hot, the other with cold water—and place them side by side where the temperature is freezing. Why is it that the hot water freezes before the cold?

Put this question to your friends and watch them wrinkle up their brows. If they are rather clever, they often find many answers, but none quite satisfactory. When they have given up and asked you the answer, how surprised they seem when you tell them that hot water does *not* freeze before cold.

One might very well ask me the question, "Well, what are you aiming at?" This is the point that I mean to set forth. It seems to be human nature, when one is asked a question, to puzzle over the answer without ever thinking of the truth of the assertion. Why don't we ask ourselves, "Does hot water freeze first?" No, of course it doesn't, but at the time we never think of this. One's mind is focused only on the solution.

If only all the poorer class of workingmen, when listening to some soap-box speaker, would look into the truth of some assertions, without taking his statements for granted, there would be fewer strikes and less discontent. For example, an agitator, trying for higher wages in a shoe factory, would say: "Every man is paid fifty cents for each pair of shoes he makes. The same pair of shoes is sold to the public for five dollars. Where does the four dollars and fifty cents go? The employers get it all. Why shouldn't we, who do the work, get more?" Of course this sounds well, and the poor workman is taken in by it, because he doesn't think of the cost of material, fuel, taxes, and many other expenses.

Therefore in our next presidential, state, or city election, or when someone is trying to convince us of certain subjects, if we are told many statistics and assertions, let us, before we cast our vote on one side, find out if what that man says is true.

In several respects that series of sentences fails to be a perfect model. Yet for our purpose in this chapter it is better than if it were perfect, because it shows that the average student can, if he uses his will-power, subordinate his ideas, vary his sentences, and so prove by his style that he has some vigor of mind.

## EXERCISES

### For Chapters XV and XVI

The material is suitable for either oral or written practice.

Rewrite these compound sentences or groups of sentences in a complex or a simple form. Some of the alterations may not be an improvement. This is not altogether a drill in making each sentence better in itself, but an exercise in forming subordinate clauses, for the purpose of encouraging complex sentences in writing and speaking.

Four devices that students often fail to think of are: (1) beginning with some phrase or subordinate clause; (2) making two verbs apply to one subject; (3) using appositives and appositive modifiers—e. g., "He had an odd mannerism, *a trick* of softly stroking his left ear"; "Herbert—*usually so excitable*—was now calmness itself"; (4) using two parallel subordinate clauses, which may be joined by *and* or *but*—e. g., "Because the room was so noisy, and because the clerk would not give me a better one, I went to another hotel" (instead of the compound form: "The room was, *and* the clerk would not, so I").

If a *but* is not contrasting the two thoughts between which it stands, write a complex sentence that will express what the author may have meant.

1. I was expecting chocolate ice-cream, so you can imagine how disappointed I was.

2. Terror seized the youths, but they dared not do anything, for they were afraid of waking their undesirable guest.

3. I left Father's lodge up there somewhere, and pretty soon I got bewildered in the fog, so I don't know what path I took.

4. I yelled the news to my brother, and we tried to hurry, but we couldn't.

5. The night was warm, so Jimmy took a bus, and, mounting to the top, he took a front seat.

6. The pearls were very valuable, but they had been insured for 150,000 dollars.

7. The horse was now very old, so he wasn't of any use on the farm, but still they kept him for his former services.

8. I wrote one composition a week, and this was rather a difficult task, but I was allowed over Saturday to do it.

9. This time the noise was in the room. There was no doubt about it. And yet no one was there except ourselves.

10. My room is on the third floor. It is a large, light room with a great many windows. There is a huge white cupboard in one corner.

11. That confounded parrot kept up its din, but its owner made no effort to stop it, so I moved out to the back porch.

12. I couldn't think of any better way to kill the time, so I wandered into a movie theater, but there was no vacant seat.

13. Our mailing-list is lost. It's the only copy of the list there is. We can't send this issue of the paper without it.

14. I was interested once in a concern that owned some barges at Key West, and the Government, during our war with Spain, bought six of them to use near Santiago.

15. Our home is down by the seashore. It is a gray house with green trimmings. We have a fine view from the windows of the sea.

16. The Secret Service agents thought, in the first place, that German spies traveled on these boats. They thought, in the second place, that cipher messages were carried on these boats in the Swiss mail.

17. I should like to offer you a bed for the night, but somebody has stolen my cot, so I haven't even any bed of my own.

18. At last the curtain settles with a discouraged thump, and everyone looks at his or her neighbor with an I-told-you-so air. Then comes the mad rush for the nearest exit.

19. There were four reporters at the trial, and so far nothing much had happened, but the reporters had hopes that something exciting would develop soon.

20. He was used to Adirondack boats, but these Cape Cod dories had no oars that were screwed to bolts that worked in a socket.

21. Of course we knew that we were taking a big chance, but we had seen him before, so we thought he was not a gambler.

22. We mixed the mortar with the utmost care, for we didn't want our wall to be a failure, but we must have used the wrong kind of sand.

23. I immediately got my telescope and examined it, and it turned out to be a very large python.

24. The old man scratched his ear a good deal and thought deeply, but he couldn't do anything better for us, so we had to sit in the broiling sun and wait for help.

25. Herman was afraid of her, so he kept very still, for he didn't want to start any trouble.

26. We had been imprisoned for three days, and the hay was getting low for the animals, so we decided to try to break out a path to the main road.

27. Mr. MacLean stopped at the edge of the canyon. He declined to ride down. He returned to the hotel for a cigar, but the two boys rode down.

28. Then a hackamore was put on the bronco's nose, and he was jerked around for about five minutes, and then the cowboy caught hold of his ears, the saddle and blanket were put on him, and the cowboy tried to ride the broncho around the pen a few times.

29. He demanded the jewels in a threatening tone, but when the man refused to give them up, he hit him over the head with the chair.

30. I went west and got as far as Omaha, but there my money gave out.

31. At this time of her life she was very fond of writing essays, but I have never seen one of them.

32. The lower floor of the house contains a hall. To the right of this is a living-room, and on the left are the stairs.

33. There was a store in Tokio that was as big as a large apartment house in New York. The people who went in had to take off their shoes and put on soft-soled shoes.

34. Pat McCarty was a young Irishman. One day he was hunting quail. A bull came through the woods. Pat was amazed. He wondered why the bull should be so angry.

35. These immigrants had a pair of canaries in a cage, but they kept the birds covered up, so I had no chance to see them.

36. These tuberculous children were stunted. A girl of fifteen was no larger than the average child of eleven. A boy of eleven was no larger than he should have been at seven.

37. I had worked hard most of the winter, so when spring came I thought I would not have to work so hard, and I slackened down.

38. The piano was old and tinkly, so it sounded like the Swiss bell-ringers, but we assured the poor woman that it had a rich, rare tone.

39. The hood was always very hot, and when you unscrewed it, you always burned your hand, and it made you want to swear.

40. She did not try to help him, but she sat calmly in the hammock. It was pleasant for her not to feel any responsibility. He kept at work in the hot kitchen.

41. At nine o'clock Amy's mother did not call her, but at eleven she was astounded to find that the girl was not in her room at all.

42. In about an hour we reached Springfield, and after a lot of inquiring we reached Forest Park. A lot of people were in the Park, and we found a cool, shaded spot, and there we ate our lunch.

43. We had spelling three times a week. We were assigned twenty words each day. These were pronounced by the teacher and written out in notebooks.

44. He used to eat half a pound of cheese every day, but that diet is changed now, for the physician said he was ruining his digestion.

45. We spent three more weeks in Denver, taking long auto rides into the mountains. There are wonderful roads in the mountains near Denver, and I enjoyed the rides a lot.

46. The ring was not exactly what she was expecting under the circumstances, but she was not altogether dissatisfied, for she was glad to see that he was economical.

47. He thinks this purse belongs to you. He didn't have time to come himself, so he asked me to be his messenger.

48. I knew what kind of fellow he was, so I told him to beware of the races, for I knew he would lose all his money if he ever saw a track.

49. His name was not in the directory, as I learned by a long and weary search, and this fact made me suspicious, so I telephoned to Hawkins.

50. This was a bloodthirsty proposal, so he would have nothing to do with it, but we afterward found out that he was not frightened.

## CHAPTER XVII

### MISMANAGED PARTS OF SENTENCES

#### A. PRELIMINARY

**1. Examples of mental wandering.** This chapter cannot classify and discuss all the vagaries that result from forgetfulness and confusion of mind. Yet attention ought to be called to some examples of the unclassifiable ways of mismanaging parts of sentences.

a. Perfect syntax will not always prevent absurdity.

In these lodge-rooms he is not somewhere else where he shouldn't be.

b. When a thought has been completely expressed, it may be rendered laughable by a postscript which is grammatically correct.

Everyone knows that intoxicating liquors, used for drinking purposes, are harmful to anyone, except when used for medicinal purposes.

c. The fact that an *if* clause can be diagramed is no guarantee that it makes sense.

Baseball games are one of the best enjoyments in my life, and I hate to miss them if I go regularly.

d. A pair of prettily parallel noun clauses may be wrecked by misusing one word.

It is wonderful to think that there are so many people in the world, and that not one is *alike*.

e. An aggregate of five perfectly managed subordinate clauses about "seeing" may be a dark mystery.

There were two closets on either side of one of the windows, each of which just slanted a little, so that I could see if my dress hung straight or if my hair looked as bad in the back as it did in the front.



f. An evil and a duty will not work together in harness if the harness consists of a bit of string like "in that."

Washington said that sectionalism was bad for the country, in that North, South, East, and West must work together.

g. The comparison suggested by "as many times as" cannot be completed by grammar; there must be a little thinking.

This log is then driven at terrific speed against the gang saw, which cuts the log in two, or into as many strips as it is driven against the saw.

The seven illustrations show us that mismanagement of the most humiliating kind results from failure to notice whether our words express what we meant them to express.

2. **Elementary ignorance.** It would not be fitting in a book of this sort to describe all kinds of gross ignorance of grammar, like "he seen it" or "myself and him went."

Nor would it be proper to devote a section to the "sentence-error"—the mistake of writing two sentences as if they were one, or of writing a subordinate clause or a phrase as if it were a whole sentence. A sentence-error is the very worst kind of mismanagement; but if a student does not understand the subject, he can learn nothing from a mere section of a chapter. He must spend weeks of review work with exercises in the Appendix, learning the rudiments of punctuation.

3. **Error that may not be an error.** The only reference to sentence-errors that need be made here is to solve a little problem that often comes up in rhetoric classes: "When is a sentence-error not an error?" Certain kinds of fragments are regularly and properly used by all of us as complete statements.

*Very good.* What's your next?

Why do I? *Because I choose.*

We understand the italicized expressions to mean "That is very good"; "I do it because I choose." This proper omission of easily understood words that are grammatically necessary we call "ellipsis." An ellipsis is not an error, but a good idiom.

What are we to think if we find an author going a great deal farther than this, using a mere clause or a modified noun as a sentence without ellipsis? Authors do once in a while write "half-sentence errors" like the following:

*Upon which* he put his hand into his fob and presented me, in his name, with a tobacco-stopper, telling me that Will had been busy all the beginning of the winter, etc.

A *wide plain*, where the broadening Floss hurries on between its green banks to the sea, and the loving tide, rushing to meet it, checks its passage with an impetuous embrace.

In school those are blue-penciled as intolerable mistakes; why are they not errors in literature? Because skilled authors realize perfectly—and we know that they realize—what they are about when they take such a liberty. If all students were as keenly alive to the management of sentence-parts, teachers would make no objection to occasional half-sentence errors. But the great majority of young writers have no such artistic license. A half-sentence in a theme is almost a sure indication of the worst form of ignorance. Hence teachers, for the sake of the greatest good to the greatest number, have to forbid this kind of sentence-error; they must train everyone in the class to know the difference between a whole and a part, and to prove that knowledge by invariably punctuating a part as a part. This is a necessity for the majority and only a slight infringement on the liberty of the minority. The only exception that could be made for a young artist would be this: "If the yearning for a half-sentence becomes very strong, you may indulge in one, provided you mark it with an asterisk and write a footnote to say that you know what you are doing."

**4. The chapter is dangerously easy.** If we should read a thousand themes written in the eleventh grade by all sorts of students in all parts of the country, we should find that about a fourth of the errors in syntax are caused by misused pronouns, another fourth by misplaced modifiers, and another fourth by non-parallel constructions. These three principal sources of

error, with some minor ones, are here grouped for convenience in eight numbered sections. To understand the explanations and cautions is easy; to correct the faulty sentences is easy. The lessons in this chapter are so easy as to be misleading. A student will get small benefit from them unless he has constantly in mind the thought: "These are typical, *habitual* mistakes, made by bright young people everywhere; this is only a display of bad *habits*, so that I can see what they are; the work of correcting my own *habits* must be done by constant attention in my own brain."

## B. PERSONAL PRONOUNS

1. **Misuses of *it*.** The pronoun *it* is so often used vaguely and unobtrusively that untrained people are prone to slip it in almost anywhere as a handy reference word to something that is in their own minds, but that they have not expressed. They do not understand that *it* must always have one of three definite constructions: (1) as an expletive, (2) as an impersonal, or (3) as an ordinary personal with a specific antecedent. The usual failure is not having an antecedent.

There are so many manufactories situated here that *it* makes the best section in the United States for the manufacturer.

The *it* is not expletive; it is not impersonal. What, then, is its antecedent? The writer might explain: "Oh, well, I mean that *because there are so many manufactories it makes the best section.*" Still he has not supplied an antecedent; *it* cannot properly refer to a *because* clause. He means "the fact that there are so many manufactories makes this the best section"—without any *it*. What antecedents of the *its* were in the mind of the writer of the next sentence?

I personally consider the movies a feature in the city or town if *it* is the second type I mentioned; and I also believe *it* a good habit if *it* does not compel a person to neglect his duties.

He seems to be thinking of "the whole institution of the moving-picture theaters." An *it* could refer to *institution* or *theater* or *movie*, but only a *they* could refer to the plural *movies*. An *it* could refer to the gerund in "going to the movies," if that is what he means. An *it* must refer to something. The something may be a whole statement or an idea that is clearly before a reader.

How shall we spend the evening? *It* is a hard question.

But any writer who uses *it* as vaguely as that is in danger, for he is training himself to write something of this sort one day when his attention wavers:

When a person spends an afternoon or an evening alone, as a rule he does not find *it* very interesting.

Though a reader can see the reference (*it* = spending the evening alone), and though references as indefinite as this can be found in literature, the amateur who allows himself such liberties is playing on quicksand. The sensible way of using *it* in school is always to supply some definite noun, or noun-like group of words, as an antecedent. *It* must not be allowed to refer to adjectives or adverbial clauses or plurals or unexpressed ideas.

**2. Misuses of *they*.** *They* has an impersonal use with the meaning of "people generally"—as in "*They* say we must not go to extremes." This is a somewhat doubtful and tricky idiom. Though it is all well enough if used cautiously, it gives an impression of ignorance when used too freely.

At almost all half-way respectable restaurants *they* have a cloak-room.

Except in this impersonal use *they* and *their* and *them* must refer to some definite plural antecedent.

The Y. M. C. A. encourages a boy to write very often to his mother and girl, and in that way *they* keep *their* clean and pure memories in the foreground.

That writer has convicted himself of being all wrong, for he first uses the singular verb *encourages* with *Y. M. C. A.* and then refers to the *Y. M. C. A.* as "they"; he speaks of *a boy* who writes to "his" mother, and then refers to *a boy* as "they." The sentence is a capital illustration of the great source of error with *they*: a writer begins by speaking of "one" or "he" or "each" or "a club"; then his mind unconsciously passes over to the idea of "each one of all these people" or "all these members of the club," and he innocently sets down on paper a *they* which refers to nothing but that phantom shift in his thought. The shift from "each one" to "all those ones" is so natural and common that it is almost an accepted idiom. Some people who are fastidious about their English allow themselves to say, "Every one in this community ought to bear *their* own burdens." Similar instances can be found in literature. But this irregular and doubtful use of *they* is not tolerated in most schools. It is our business to learn the normal way of referring to singulars by *he* or *it*, and of always providing a plural antecedent for *they*.

An exception is proper with collective nouns like *team*, *audience*, *fleet*, if we mean to indicate the individual members, as in "The audience rose wearily from *their* seats."

**3. Faulty reference.** Any third-person pronoun is mis-managed if a reader has to pause and examine the sentence before he can find out what the reference is.

The class which enters in the fall is given teas, dances, and receptions until *they* are nearly worn out.

A reader who has seen a singular noun, *class*, and then three plural nouns, might think when he sees *they* that the plurals are being referred to; since teas and receptions are not usually worn out, the reader glances back and says, "Oh—of course it's the *class* that's worn out." The meaning is so obvious that many readers would not even notice the wrong possibility. So the writer might defend himself, might say that it doesn't

pay to be so fussy with pronouns. If so, he is preparing himself to make comical mistakes like the following:

At seven we have setting-up exercises; we get out in front of the tents in our pajamas and go through with *them* in fifteen minutes.

He has said that "we go through with our pajamas in fifteen minutes." It is never safe to require a pronoun to leap back over intervening nouns for its antecedent; we must repeat the noun, or supply a synonym, or recast the sentence.

If two people or two things are spoken of in one sentence, pronouns must not make criss-cross references to their antecedents.

The fellow had stared rudely at *him*, and so *he* knocked *him* down.

Here the meaning is so unmistakable that we need not say that the sentence is faulty. If criss-crossing never were any worse, there would be no need of mentioning the subject. Authors are often lax: In the sentence that begins "Upon which he put" (page 293) Addison has a successive *he* and *his* which referred to different men. But Addison was so alive to the need of clear reference that he never went farther than this degree of freedom. He never put a coat of paint on some Italians as the next writer did.

Back of the street are the little old tumbled-down dwellings in which the inhabitants, who are Italians, live. *They* look as though they had never seen a coat of paint, and I don't believe they have.

The references in the following sentences can be made out by a little exertion, but a reader who is not expecting a puzzle is perplexed.

The convicted man had one ray of hope. The night of the murder *he* had been to a friend's house, who had suddenly moved, and *he* had not been able to locate *him*. If *he* could but find *him*, *he* would have the proof that he was not mixed up in the murder. *He* had friends who were looking for *him*, but as yet they had not been able to trace *him*.

In any similar passage the best way of managing is to have *he* and *him* refer to one man until the reader has been put safely on the track of the other man. Or names and nouns may be used. Or direct quotation may make everything easy for both writer and reader. The way *not* to manage is to put the name or the noun in parenthesis after the pronoun.

He said it was his (Cox's) turn to go.

This is the ostrich's way of avoiding trouble—to put the name in a hole and pretend that the trouble can't be seen. If a noun is needed, it should be used; but burying it alongside the pronoun is like attempting to conceal a deformity by pointing at it.

**4. Impersonal *you*.** *You* has a common impersonal meaning of "everyone in general," as in "*you* never can tell." Although this idiom is as old as the language, it remains somewhat colloquial. If it is carelessly combined with other uses of pronouns, it is weak and disreputable.

*You* know *you* are always flush on Saturday night, and so *we* had a big dinner.

**5. Possessive with a gerund.** The possessive of a personal pronoun is usually expected before gerunds in the following construction: "Pardon *my* not noticing you." "We appreciate *your* coming to see us." "I object to *his* going so soon." (There is a different construction with an object pronoun modified by a participle: "He saw *me* watching you.") The possessive with the gerund, though often disregarded by English writers, is generally required in American schools.

**6. Nominative or objective.** Here is a true story of a difficulty that was confessed by a civil engineer who was lecturing at a university: "I never feel sure whether I ought to say between *you and I* or between *you and me*. Which is right? How do you know?" This man, who could solve most complicated problems in physics, had never worked out the simplest example of addition in grammar. *And* adds together two words of the same kind in the same construction. If we say *with him* and

*with me*, we must say "with him and *me*, between you and *me*." The second word of the pair after a preposition is also an object and must also be in the objective case. So after verbs we must have "invited Sherman and *me*; overtook my father and *me*; welcomed his friend and *him* equally."

### C. RELATIVE PRONOUNS

1. The antecedents of *who*, *which*, and *that*. *Who* normally refers to persons; it sometimes refers to animals or places or objects if they are somewhat personified. *Which* is used for animals or things. Why some people should interchange these meanings is a mystery. Teachers are not infrequently startled by finding in themes "my uncle, *which* lives in Montana," "the cow *who* gives most milk." Another mystery of relative pronouns is that students who use *that* habitually in their speech seem compelled to use an unnatural *which* in their writing. For some reason the formality of writing causes an overuse of *which*—*which* referring to persons, *which* referring vaguely to a whole statement, *which* modifying a noun.

A policeman *which* stood on the corner.

He knew that the policeman was surly, *which* rattled him as he approached the crossing.

He was well acquainted with the policeman, *which thing* gave him confidence.

*Which* ought not to refer to a person. A *which* may refer to a whole statement, but an attempt to employ it for that purpose is more than likely to result in a wobbly sentence. To use *which thing* or *which fact* or *which idea* is a dubious undertaking.

2. Five abuses of relatives. Though this chapter is no place for rudiments of grammar, it seems necessary to point out five common ways in which relatives are grammatically abused.

a. *The repeated preposition*. If a relative has once been made the object of a preposition, it must not be made the object



a second time of the same preposition. Yet trained students sometimes forgetfully repeat a preposition thus:

*Of* which in his youth he had been very fond *of*; *through* which he never again wanted to pass *through*.

b. *The false object.* Little parenthetical clauses like "he thought" or "we considered" often mislead trained students into supposing that a relative is an object.

He had a clerk *whom* he supposed was perfectly honest.

The relative is not the object of *supposed*, but is the subject of *was*; the correct form is the nominative *who*.

c. *The false singular.* Persons who can glibly recite about "agreeing in gender, person, and number" often forget the plural number of an antecedent, and so write thus:

This was one of the most destructive storms that *has* ever visited our state.

The antecedent, *storms*, is plural; therefore the relative *that* is plural; therefore the verb should be *have*. The sentence means that "of all those destructive storms *that have* visited our state this was the most destructive one."

d. *Left without construction.* In careless speaking we often start a relative clause and swing to some other construction, leaving the relative pronoun unattached. Sometimes a sentence of this sort slips into a composition and is not noticed in revision.

He is the kind of man *that* you wonder how he can support a family.

e. *The false conjunction.* *And* or *but* should not be used before a relative except to join it to a previous relative in the same construction. The following conjunctions are wrongly used:

I had a good deal of trouble with a wrench in my left shoulder, *but which* I thought would be all right soon.

There were a lot of old boxes in the cellar, stored years ago, *and that* we thought would answer our purpose.

D. THE CONJUNCTION *THAT*

1. **The double *that*.** If a writer uses a noun clause which contains an adverb clause, he is in danger of repeating *that* after the adverb clause.

He thought *that* if it should grow very dark before he reached home, *that* he might need a lantern.

The second *that* should be omitted.

2. **Wrongly placed *that*.** If the first *that* were omitted in the sentence about the lantern, we should have real confusion, as we do in the following illustration:

He requested if we could spare the time *that* we should help him.

We need the conjunction at the beginning of the clause; we do not like to have it repeated: "He requested *that* if we could spare the time we should help him."

3. **The omitted *that*.** In many cases it is proper to omit *that* at the beginning of a noun clause—as in "We thought *he would never come*." It may sometimes be preferable to omit the conjunction—for example, if two noun clauses come in succession:

We hoped *that* he would tell us *that* he did not need us.

Possibly the sentence would sound better if the first *that* were omitted. But unless there is some good reason—such as avoiding stiffness or repetition—*that* should be used. It is usually needed for a clause that is a predicate nominative or that is in apposition with a noun: "I have a suspicion *that* he is not quite honest." In the following sentence we feel as if there were a hole before the clause.

He made a proposal we should begin working earlier.

4. ***That* for a reason.** A clause in apposition with the word *reason* begins with *why*: "The reason *why he exults* is easy to see." But a clause used as a predicate explaining the noun *reason* begins—as most noun clauses do—with *that*: "My reason is *that I fear you will take cold*."

## E. SINGULAR AND PLURAL

1. **Singular or plural with *there*?** A curiosity of English syntax is the singular nouns that may have a plural verb when used after the expletive *there*: "There *are* a number of errors"; "there *are* a lot of excellent substitutes." Except for the words *lot*, *number*, *dozen*, etc., we all ought to feel the logic of "there is" and "there are." If we are using plurals we must say "there are": "There *were* many more sights; there *are* several things; there *are* two wheels." If we have a singular subject, we must have a singular verb: "There *was* an abundance of quotations; there *is* a pile of dusty books; there *is* a group of politicians; there *was* a flock of crows."

2. **Singular or plural with a collective?** A collective noun usually requires a singular verb ("The choir *was* rising for the anthem"), but may have a plural verb if the statement refers to individuals ("The family *were* bidding each other good night").

3. **A plural that deceives.** A common cause of a false plural of the verb is a plural noun that comes between a singular subject and its verb:

The neighing of the horses *were* heard.

The plural *horses* has distracted attention and has produced the statement that "the neighing were heard."

4. **Singular with *or* and *nor*.** The singular verb is required with *or* and *nor* joining two singular subjects, because each subject is applied separately to the verb. The following are correct: "Either coffee or tea *is* going to be served; neither one nor the other *was* refused; a cucumber or a radish *is* harder to digest; this man or his partner *has* done the mischief."

5. **Plural with *and*.** The plural is demanded by *and*, which presents two things together: "Tea and coffee *were* served; an orange and a banana *were* tucked in."

6. **Two curious singulars.** If the two nouns really mean one article or one condition, the verb may be singular: "Bread and milk *was* all we got; the tumult and the shouting *dies*." For a

similar reason plural nouns that signify one quantity take a singular verb. "Eleven weeks *is* sufficient time; five thousand dollars *has* been subscribed."

7. Singular with *kind* and *sort*. The words *kind* and *sort* are singular and must be modified by singular adjectives, even when followed by plural nouns: "*This* kind of remedies; *that* kind of politicians; *that* sort of excuses."

#### F. MISUSED MODIFIERS

1. Overuse of *when* and *where*. These two words are able to domineer over young writers, forcing themselves in constantly where other words would be better. Here are the four chief ways in which they obtrude.

a. They take the place of *which*. Students commonly write about "a scene when" or a "book where," seeming so fond of the conjunctions that they forget the possibility of "a scene in which" or "a book in which" or "the station from which."

b. *Where* displaces the conjunction *that* in statements about what has been heard or read: "I see in the paper *where* there has been a riot in Chicago." "Did you notice in his lecture *where* he said that molecules were big?" Correct noun clauses are frequently formed by *where*, as in "I saw *where* you were going"; but we cannot "see where" in a newspaper, for that is only a printed page. We see *that* there has been a riot, or we notice *that* he said in a lecture.

c. In definitions *when* and *where* cause very painful constructions by supplanting a modified noun. A binomial, for example, is *an expression that consists of*; but the hypnotizing *where* induces us to say, "A binomial is *where*." A caucus really is *a meeting of*, but if *when* makes a pass over our brain, we murmur helplessly, "A caucus is *when*." If *when* and *where* had their way, they would oblige us all to write definitions of this form: "A watch *is when* you pull something out of your pocket and see what time it is." "A sandwich *is where* you put some meat between slices of bread." A noun should be defined by the

use of another noun, an adjective or an adverb by the use of some adjectival or adverbial expression: "*Raucous* means *harsh and croaking*; *raucously* means *in a harsh and croaking voice*."

d. Instead of a sensible modifying clause at the beginning of a sentence *when* compels us to supply a tacked-on, weather-beaten leap-to like this:

I took a spoonful of the mixture, *when* suddenly I heard a step on the sidewalk.

*When* is a clever artist. He knows that most young people prefer to begin every sentence with a subject and verb; he shows them in their reading a good many examples of "additive *when*"; he leads them to guess that splicing anything on with *when* is proper; he fools them completely. Students who free themselves from his hocus-pocus quickly learn to begin sentences with the unimportant modifying idea, and then to give the main idea in the main clause.

*Just as* I was taking a spoonful, I heard a step on the sidewalk.

**2. Restrictive and non-restrictive.** Any restrictive modifier is mismanaged if it is set off by a comma.

This advice will be relished by all boys, who dislike their parents.

The comma means "and I add the statement that of course all boys do dislike their parents." Any non-restrictive modifier is mismanaged if it is not set off by a comma.

There were rows and rows of little two-family houses in which the factory hands *lived with only a few larger houses* off on a hill at the side where the wealthy people lived.

The *with* in that sentence is clumsy enough and difficult enough to understand; if there is no comma, the meaning is that "the hands lived with houses."

The distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive modifiers is hard for some students to learn; they have to acquire it gradually by special training. It is too broad a topic for this

chapter, but must be pointed out here to students who are not familiar with it. (See pages 546, 547 of the Appendix.)

**3. Carelessness in placing.** The greatest cause of errors with modifiers is placing them too far away from what they modify. All sorts of ambiguous meanings, funny mistakes, and contorted constructions are caused by failure to set modifiers close to what they modify.

**a. Queer sounds.** Modifiers are sometimes mismanaged by being so placed that they produce a queer sound: "He came running *in in* a hurry; this is *also so*." A modifier may be so placed that it seems to deny another modifier: "He acted *with* perfect coolness *without* any thought of his own danger"; "we saw him *seldom, often* not for months at a time."

**b. Care in correcting.** Adverbs often cause blunders by squeezing themselves into a sentence too soon or too late.

I felt sure that I had seen the man who was walking with her on the other side of the room *before*.

That sounds as if "he was walking with her before," whereas the writer surely meant that "I had seen the man before." If we try to put *before* close to *seen*, we shall produce a rather formal sentence: "I had seen before the man who was walking." It is a fact that our English idiom regularly slips the object in between the verb and *before*—thus: "I have seen you before." We cannot transfer a modifier as easily and mechanically as if we were doing a grammar exercise. The misplacing may have been caused by a conflict of two idioms; and, if so, the correction must be made with caution. We may choose to say "somewhere before I had seen the man who," or "I had previously seen the man who"; or we may wish to make two sentences, following the time order: (1) There he was walking with her; (2) when I saw him, I felt sure.

**c. Too late in the sentence.** Usually the transferring can be done with little effort. Anyone who is willing to begin with a modifier could instantly put the following italicized phrase where it belongs.

We could see plainly the close-packed sidewalks, the narrow streets, and the crooked alleys *from our position*.

A reader is not exactly confused by that form of statement, for he can tell at one reading what is meant. But an unpleasant bump is caused by that unexpected modifying phrase that has run away from its position and bobs up after the sentence ought to close. The same effect is felt in the next sentence.

This fact gives a serious touch to the situation *also*.

Of course the writer meant that "this fact also gives." Did the next writer mean to speak of "molten silver in its silence"?

The water slipped by like molten silver in its silence.

Of course he must have been thinking of the silent water or of the way in which the water slipped silently; but since he is a slave to the "subject and verb first" habit, he allows the modifier to clamber in as best it can beyond where it belongs. In the next example we see a phrase that jumped for an earlier position in the sentence and landed right in the middle, upsetting the whole company of words.

Coming home *from school to my mind* is always the pleasantest part of the day.

Modifiers can never be trusted to stow themselves. The writer must pack them in. A resolute writer—one who is not timid about the beginning of a sentence—could have placed "to my mind" at the beginning of the sentence.

4. *Only*. The word most commonly misplaced is *only*. In the following sentence we see that *only* emphasizes *collected*; it is "only the collecting" that he does.

He *only* collects the shells; he doesn't do any sorting or polishing.

But what is *only* intended to emphasize in the next sentence?

He *only* collects the shells that will take a high polish.

The writer means that "he collects *only* the shells that." It may be argued that literature furnishes a great many examples

of *only* that comes early in the sentence. What is more, we can argue grammatically that *only* is an adverb modifying the verb, and that it has just as much right before the verb as after it. The answer to both arguments (and they are proper ones) is this fact of school life: Most students add a touch of improvement to their style when they learn to place *only* close to the word to be emphasized, as in the following examples: "It costs *only* three dollars. We have *only* an hour to spare. I can find in this essay *only* three figures of speech." So much space is given to that one adverb because it is extremely common and because, in spite of being debatable, it is much emphasized in schools and textbooks.

5. *With*. The most sly and obstinate misplacer in the language is *with*. This word has a wide range of uses for attaching almost any circumstance to any fact in an undefined way. Think of all the nouns that might be used, in the greatest variety of meanings, by placing them after "He works with": a will, his neighbors, fraudulent devices, no prospect of success, no food in his stomach, a smile on his face, deep hatred in his heart, a bullet in his lung, his hands, astronomical problems, the Dudley Manufacturing Company. A careless student concludes from this wide diversity of meanings that he is safe in any use of *with*, but it really is the most unreliable and unmanageable word in his vocabulary. *With* operates in the most unobtrusive and clever manner. It may produce a false or foggy meaning.

*With* the great need of engineers in Peru I had a good chance of a job.

It contrives to have itself appear two or even three times in one sentence.

He was struggling *with* his freezing fingers *with* a can *with* a screw-top on it.

It smoothly pretends to be a restrictive modifier when it is decidedly unrestrictive.

The umpire *fined* him *with* the result that he kept quiet during the rest of the game.



The umpire did not "fine with a result." A comma before *with* would make an orderly sentence.

Sometimes a restrictive *with* wedges itself in before a relative clause in such a way as to create mischief.

Off to the left is a long, low factory *with a bright red roof which* stands alongside the railroad.

That sounds as if "the roof stands alongside the railroad."

**6. Gerunds in phrases.** A gerund names an action performed by some subject; the sentence often shows who the subject is—thus: "After *playing* in the attic for an hour, the children came downstairs." We see without any effort that *playing* refers to *children*. What does the gerund in the following refer to?

After *spreading* out the lunch on a flat rock the mosquitos began to be troublesome.

Gerunds may properly be quite independent of any named subject: "*Sending* an army into Mexico is not so easy." The point of this paragraph is that gerunds must not be made to seem to depend on some noun with which they have no connection.

**7. Participles.** A participle is never independent; it must always, as a mere matter of grammar, modify some noun or pronoun—thus: "*Thinking* that the performance was nearly over, we began to put on our coats." In the following sentence there is no word for *thinking* to modify:

*Thinking* the performance was nearly over, it seemed to be time to put on our coats.

The participle is left hanging in the air; it dangles in space, with no grammatical support beyond its own phrase. Such an unrelated verbal is technically called "hanging" or "dangling." Two more typical examples are here given:

*Knowing* that he would have to write this pledge at the bottom of his paper, all temptation to cheat would be removed.

*Having gone* for twenty hours without a mouthful to eat, the stale bread and cheese tasted very good.

These errors with *ing* words are caused by ignorance of the two correct constructions that are possible. We might make the second sentence grammatical in one of two ways. (a) We might use a gerund as the subject of a verb: "*Having gone* so long without a mouthful to eat *made* the bread taste good." (b) We might supply a pronoun beyond the participial phrase: "*Having gone* so long without food, *I* found that the stale bread tasted good."

It may be said of participles in general that they are somewhat weak and unreliable modifiers, often shifty in meaning. Unless they are forced to modify the particular noun or pronoun that the writer desires them to modify, they will destroy syntax.

**8. Nominative absolute.** A nominative absolute, though proper as a matter of grammar, is perilous as a matter of idiom. The absolute is rarely advisable beyond the limits of indicating time ("the moon now being almost down") or weather ("the day being sultry") or some circumstance added after the main clause ("the bell ringing violently all the while"). Though the absolute construction has a wide variety of uses, and though an artist with words may not be afraid of those uses, the rest of us had better refrain. At best the absolute is somewhat stiff and Latinic. At its worst it is a sorry, sprawling, shapeless structure. Certainly it ought not to be attempted by anyone who is not entirely at ease with the most involved relations of verbals in complicated sentences. "I having gone" is an example of what frequently results when an amateur is over-confident with a participial absolute. In any but practiced hands this construction causes sentence-errors or non-parallel constructions or hanging participles.

The natural substitute in English is a modifying clause. Why should we yearn to go back to Cæsar's time, pick up a Roman idiom, and lug it down the centuries into twentieth-century America? "I having gone" is imitation Latin; "I had gone so long that" is genuine modern English. An absolute must always be in some way or to some extent a modifier of a verb, showing

the time or cause or circumstance. The chances are two to one that in a theme it will prove to be an unsatisfactory modifier, sounding artificial. The normal English way of showing reason or circumstance is to use a clause.

**9. Adjectives.** Errors in the use of adjectives are fewer and less striking than with any other part of speech.

**a. Dangling adjectives.** Sometimes adjectives dangle just as participles do. "*Confident* of his ability, the position seemed a very easy one." Beyond the adjective group there must be some noun or pronoun for *confident* to modify: "Confident of his ability, *he* felt sure," etc.

**b. Predicate adjectives.** Space must not be taken in this chapter for a discussion of the difference between predicate adjectives and adverbs, but it seems necessary to post a notice of that distinction. Verbs like *smell*, *taste*, *feel*, and *look* may have—usually have—predicate adjectives after them, such as *sweet*, *good*, *bad*, *fine*, *pretty*. To say that "it looks *finely*" is to say that "it does its looking in a fine manner"; we usually mean that "it appears to be *fine*," "it looks *fine*." But the great majority of verbs ought to be followed by adverbs that tell how the action was performed: "He played *well*; he squinted *badly*; it is growing *finely*."

**c. Two articles needed.** One article will not always serve for two nouns; *the* or *an* may have to be repeated: "a man and a dog, the house and *the* silo, the North and *the* South." The name of our country seems in danger of losing the article that has always been used with it heretofore; our country's name is "*the* United States."

**10. Relatives.** Relative clauses belong near their antecedents. Of course a closely modifying phrase may intervene without causing confusion: "There is no *school* in the country *that* cannot be improved." Sometimes an intervening phrase may be fairly long and complicated: "There is no *school* within the boundaries of these forty-eight states *that* cannot be improved." All such separation is dangerous, for one of the intervening words

may have a meaning that will fit the relative clause, and so tear it from its proper attachment and destroy it—as the word *dollars* does in the following sentence:

I bought a neat little table *for four dollars that a dealer wanted to get rid of.*

Any relative clause that wants to play a trick on a high-school writer has an easy time with a student who habitually places the subject and verb first. If he must first drive in that post of "I bought," and then from there feel his way through the modifiers, he is an easy victim. A writer who is not timid, who can boldly begin with "for four dollars," cannot be fooled by a relative clause; he will say what he means: "a little *table that a dealer wanted to get rid of.*" A person who must begin with the subject and verb will every now and then write thus:

A twelve-thousand-ton steamer was lying idly *at the dock that might have been carrying wheat and sugar.*

A writer who is not afraid of beginning with a phrase and of placing a subject after a verb would have written: "At the dock was lying a twelve-thousand-ton *steamer that might have been carrying wheat and sugar.*"

A relative clause must be so placed that its antecedent is unmistakable.

**11. Parenthetical statements.** Brief parenthetical clauses are often inserted as modifiers without any commas: ("Here is a brick that *I suppose* is 4000 years old"); and similar clauses that are longer or less restrictive may be set off by commas: ("So I had failed, *as Mother said I should,* and was ashamed to go home"). But if a parenthetical statement does not serve as such a modifier, and is inserted as a side-remark of independent importance, it should be put between dashes: "When it came my turn to tell a story—and no excuses were accepted from anybody that afternoon—I was a man up a tree." Using weak commas for an independent side-remark makes a reader expect a modifier, and so confuses him. Use dashes for interjected statements.

## G. NON-PARALLEL CONSTRUCTIONS

1. In comparisons. If a writer has been telling about two roads, and then asks which is the "shortest," we feel that he has swung from one construction to another—that is, from a comparison of two objects to a comparison of more than two. We expect a writer to abide by what he starts with. If he is speaking of two things, we expect him to use a "two thing" form of the adjective—*shorter* or *more* or *better*.

2. With *either* and *neither*. If we see *neither*, we have a right to expect that whatever is introduced will be paralleled by something that is soon to come after a *nor*: "There was *neither any sense in his demand nor any tact in the way he made it.*" "We could see *neither fish nor bait.*" Whatever follows *neither* ought to be parallel in meaning and form with what follows *nor*. Therefore the following sentence is distorted:

Neither was *the lecture very interesting* nor *very instructive*.

The parallel structure is: "The lecture was *neither very interesting nor very instructive.*"

The same parallelism must be kept with *either* . . . or: "This examination may be taken *either at home or at your school.*" If *either* comes too early in the sentence, the construction is entirely distorted.

Either he spends his time in idling or in making trouble.

The writer means "*either in idling or in making.*"

A worse failure with *either* or *neither* is caused by switching to another verb or to another subject and verb.

They *neither have to work, nor do they pay any taxes.*

There was *neither a newspaper to be bought, nor could we see any bulletin.*

The first sentence will be correct if *have* is understood after *nor*: "They *neither have to work nor [have] to pay any taxes.*" The second sentence could be recast thus: "We could *neither buy a newspaper nor see any bulletin.*"

3. *Not only, but also.* Parallelism must be maintained with *not only* . . . *but also*: "You not only *gain a living*, but also [gain] *a good education*." In the following sentence the two parts introduced by the double conjunction are entirely dissimilar:

Our society has given help, not only *to the children of unemployed fathers*, but also *we have aided the fathers to secure jobs*.

The two parts should be similar, parallel: "Our society has not only *given help to children*, but has also *aided the fathers*." The following jumbled sentence was written by a student of exceptional ability in composition, and was not noticed by him when he revised his theme:

The description is so exceedingly vivid and detailed that by reading it you gain not only *a sharp impression of that particular hall*, but *it gives you an accurate idea* of the manners, dress, and customs of the time.

The sentence ought to say that you gain two things: "not only a sharp impression, but also an accurate idea." The writer faltered, was afraid to keep on with an orderly pair of objects, felt the need of attaching himself once more to some subject and verb, and hence slipped in the "it gives" which ruined his construction. He did worse. He forgot that he had set out with the form "you gain not only," and so slipped into "it gives you." The sentence promises us something, and then breaks its promise. *Not only* . . . *but also* is a very common cause of non-parallelism.

4. *With both.* There is a tendency to fail to follow up a parallel construction promised by *both*.

This tonic both *helped Father*, and *Mother was also benefited*.

Whatever follows *both* is a promise to supply a parallel construction after *and*: "This tonic both *helped Father* and *benefited Mother*." *Both* . . . *and* should join two similar words or two similar phrases or two similar statements: "A sea voyage will be good for both *your nerves* and *your lungs*." "A bank

account will be both *an insurance for your family and an incentive to further economy.*"

**5. With negatives.** Certain oddities appear in connection with negatives. If we have made a negative statement and wish to add another negative parallel in meaning, we can use *nor*. For some reason many students will make curious wriggles to avoid *nor*.

It is unpleasant to the taste, *and also it is not* digestible.

He wouldn't go to school himself, *or he didn't* want his brother to go.

We had no warm blankets *and also no* mattresses.

There is not much excitement in the story; *then too there is no* real moral.

One little *nor* would straighten out these tangles of "also not" and "then too no," producing parallel parts in each sentence—thus: "It is not pleasant, *nor* is it digestible." "He wouldn't go to school himself, *nor* did he want his brother to." "We had no warm blankets, *nor* any mattresses." "There is not much excitement in the story; *nor* is there any real moral."

**6. With clauses.** If we have two clauses similar in kind and emphasis, we help a reader by keeping them parallel in phrasing. If we shift from *that* to *which*, or from *that* to nothing at all, or from *whether* to *if*, we seem to tell a reader that the clauses are not parallel. Three illustrations are worth notice.

I have a watch *that* has run perfectly for twenty years, but *which* is unreliable now.

I thought *that* I was safe in such a secure hiding-place and ( ) there was not the least possibility of discovery.

I asked him *whether* he couldn't help me out and *if* he knew whether his friends would help.

**7. In a list of appositives.** A common source of non-parallel construction is a list of descriptive items in apposition.

It was a glittering spectacle—the lake and the huge glacier in the center, and then the snowy peaks rose on either side.

Here we see our same old familiar enemy, *and*. He is the great destroyer of unified and parallel structures. He can mis-

lead—he continually does mislead—all persons who are timid because of their ignorance of grammar. Such persons are not sure that it is possible to keep right on with three nouns in the same parallel formation; they are doubtful after setting down two nouns, and so hasten to attach themselves once more to some comfortable verb—in this case to *rose*. An unfrightened student could have followed out the original purpose without quailing at all: “It was a glittering spectacle—the lake and the huge glacier in the center, the snowy peaks on either side.”

**8. With supposed appositives.** But over-confidence is worse than timidity. A noun must always have some definite construction, such as being in apposition or in the nominative absolute; a noun cannot be parallel with an adjective, nor can it be the subject of an unknown verb. A writer who has only a slight acquaintance with grammar may suppose that appositives and absolutes are permitted to riot where they like, and so may turn them loose in these ways:

(1) The story is neither comical nor flat—just ordinary human *feelings* and *interest*.

So far as the nouns have any construction, they are in apposition with the adjectives; they ought to be objects of a verb like *has* in a second independent clause.

(2) I have never felt sure about the meaning of “subordination”—whether according to importance, one idea standing out, or what.

After the dash we see a phrase parallel with a nominative absolute. A pair of gerunds could have been used after a verb: “whether it means *arranging* according to importance, or *having* one idea stand out.”

**9. With vague absolutes.** The greatest liberty that a noun can have while being within the law is to stand as a kind of vague absolute in a list of detached items of description:

His study would have put a housekeeper in a frenzy—*books* under the cot, *papers* standing in dusty stacks, *riding-togs* hanging from the mantel.



The construction of the three nouns can be explained and is proper. But if a young writer is careless in building something of the same sort for himself, he will produce sad botching.

At that moment our friend from the art colony rushed in, hatless, arms waving, with the sweat streaming from his face, gasping out words of fright.

There are four different kinds of modifier of *friend* (an adjective, a nominative absolute, a phrase, and a participle); a writer must arrange four reasonably similar items.

**10. With prepositions.** Two nouns may not be usable with the same preposition.

He has an interest and eagerness *for* examining old manuscripts  
The old lady had considerable knowledge and insight *of* these matters.

In such cases we must supply the needed preposition. To say that "he has an interest in and an eagerness for examining" is to secure parallelism; but the form is stilted. To arrange a smooth wording for two nouns that require different prepositions is more difficult than might be supposed. We may have to resort to an appositive or to a compound predicate: "He has an interest in examining old manuscripts, *a real eagerness* for that kind of work." "The old lady had considerable knowledge of these matters and showed a real insight into them."

**11. With verbals.** Whether we use infinitives or gerunds may be a matter of indifference in a given sentence, but pairing an infinitive with a gerund is never a matter of indifference.

I was astonished *at seeing* that he could play the piano and *to hear* that he could sing acceptably.

**12. From a subordinate to an independent clause.** The most noticeable and most unpardonable lack of parallelism is to shift from a subordinate to an independent clause.

We want to spend the summer in the Adirondacks, because Father is fond of canoeing; also my two sisters like to be on the water.

In form this is a compound sentence and can be defended, but

in fact it contains two reasons that ought to be presented in two parallel clauses introduced by *because*. This form of error is most likely to result from using *also* or *and*. It is most common as an unreasonable jump from a subordinate relative clause to an independent personal-pronoun clause.

We saw a magician *who* drew four guinea-pigs from a silk hat, *and he* also drew a bowl of water from under his coat-tails.

This is simply another phase of the old, old truth that *and* has the will and the power to destroy any form of proper structure.

**13. Because of an explanation.** Explanations—which, as we saw in Chapter XIII, may destroy unity—sometimes cause a writer to forget the plan with which he set out.

I was pacing the platform in the grimy station at Cincinnati, *where we had* three hours to wait (for our train had not made the close connection), *and so there was* nothing better to do.

**14. With *and*.** It must occur to anyone who studies this chapter that *and so* in that sentence has a familiar sound. Here is another appearance of the same small symptom of the great malady. If we wish to secure unified and coherent structure in sentences, no one recipe will bring so great an amount of success as the brusque advice, "Drop that *and*."

## H. SEQUENCE OF TENSES

**1. From present to past.** A familiar way of making past actions vivid in narrative is to use a present tense. A passage that begins in the present tense ought not to drop back into the past. A student who undertakes this "historical present" will find it more easy than he supposes to slip into his customary style. He begins with the scene as it *is* in the book he has been reading; shortly his mind tends to go back to events as they *were*.

The hunter *is* riding through a deep, wild glen. Not far in front of him *is* the wounded stag. Now the good steed *begins* to waver. Suddenly there *was* a, etc.

**2. Lack of past perfect.** A sentence is sometimes misleading or obscure because of a past tense that ought to be past perfect.

By the time we reached the post-office it *was* closed for an hour. When I *watered* the lawn, I was free to go off with the boys.

The writers mean that the office "*had been* closed," that I was free "after I *had* watered." If a verb is meant to show time that was clearly before the time of another verb in the past tense, it should be past perfect. A *had* is often a clarifying and pleasing addition to a sentence.

**3. Needless perfect infinitives.** The need of a perfect infinitive is less common than most people suppose. Ordinarily the verb ought to be perfect and the infinitive to be present: "I should have liked *to go*." "It would have been pleasant *to see* you." The perfect infinitive indicates an action completed before the time of the verb; hence "should like to have seen" means literally "wanted to have been all through with the seeing." Yet, strangely enough, people who are lazy with past perfect verbs are likely to be ardent users of these cumbersome and bothersome perfect infinitives.

**4. With *in order that*.** The proper verbs to use after *in order that* are *may* and *might*. To use "in order that I *can*" or "in order that they *will*" is to go outside of the English language. We use *may* after a present tense, *might* after a past tense: "I *speak* strongly, in order that you *may* believe it; I *spoke* harshly, in order that I *might* teach him better manners."

## I. THE UNEMPHATIC END

A person who habitually begins his sentences with subject and verb is likely at times to close them with the least important or least entertaining item.

The charge for tuition does not cover half the cost of the student's instruction in a college where tuition is paid.

After we have read the startling fact about the cost of instruction, we are obliged to taper off with an after-thought equivalent to "and now I happen to think that in some colleges no tuition is paid." The reader suffers the penalty of the writer's inability or unwillingness to look ahead. If there are such modifying ideas as may take off the edge of a whole statement, they should be accounted for at the beginning. We may be excusable for having the first part of a sentence blunt and heavy, for it is like the back of a knife; we are not excused for so clogging the end of a sentence—the edge of it—that it will not cut. The following sentences are familiar types of added-on expressions that blunt the whole effect.

As a sequel to this round trip the R-33 is going to be sent on a journey to India, *according to dispatches from London.*

He liked to dash madly about in his speedboat *after he had seen whether there was any mail at the office.*

It must not be inferred that all sentences are like knives, that every sentence ought to come to a keen edge, or that there is always one idea which is fittest for the end. To arrange every sentence with a climax would be a monotony of sharpness. Many sentences—perhaps a majority of them—are composed of expressions that are of equal interest. For example: "Even the simplest soul, buried in the wilds of Broadway, must feel the unrest." If we examine the sentence apart from its context, we do not know which of the three parts was most important. Not infrequently a brief prepositional phrase, a very slight thing grammatically, is worthy to come at the end because of the interest it carries: "Reports from Paris say that the situation is serious, but this is flatly disputed by a dispatch *from London.*" Perhaps the writer wanted to close with "London." If we can imagine any reason why a writer prefers to put a certain phrase or clause at the end of his sentence, we find no fault. We object only to a close that was never intended, to an afterthought or postscript which a writer, if challenged, would confess to be out of place.

There is seldom an excuse for closing with "etc." Though in

a scientific treatise that abbreviation may mean something worth while, in a theme it means "and some other things that I can't think of just now." Equally indefensible are "and everything," "and all like that," "or something of that sort." Because a preposition is often a weak and formless termination of a sentence, grammarians used to give a rule that "a sentence should never end with a preposition." The rule will not hold; many strong sentences close with prepositions. (For example, Hamlet's "Fly to others that we know not *of*.") The only rule that always holds, that ought to be binding on us in every case is: "A sentence should never close with an unconsidered, tag-end preposition."

The unemphatic close is most likely to occur in the writing of a person who habitually thinks in terms of "and something else" or who habitually fails to think of beginning with a modifier. What is true of the unemphatic close is true of most ways of mismanaging parts of sentences. It is true—as we have seen so often in Chapters XII-XVII—of all kinds of failure to construct good and varied sentences. The faults are sure to appear more frequently in a theme written by a student who habitually coördinates all ideas and timidly begins all sentences with the subject and verb. If a person can train himself to begin frequently with modifiers and to subordinate many of his ideas, he has learned the great secrets of managing both the small and the large parts of his sentences.

### EXERCISES

If you see that a sentence is faulty, you can easily rewrite it in correct form. Mere rewriting is a comparatively simple task. A harder and much more useful kind of work is to explain in precisely what way the sentence is misconstructed. For a student who does not understand the type of error can often get a correct result by recasting on a different pattern. In that operation he has not learned how to manage the type that is illustrated, and so may make a similar error in his own speech

the next day. The mere exercise of making over sentences is of small benefit; the profit comes from seeing what is wrong and for just what reason it is wrong. The mind learns nothing so long as it simply says, "That doesn't sound right; I should say it this way." But when a mind has become able to analyze other people's errors, it has learned to analyze its own errors in advance, and so to prevent them from slipping off the tongue or getting on to paper. That is what exercises are for—to prevent our own errors in future.

Some of the sentences that follow are correct and effective. This is not an exercise in "changing everything you see," but in deciding whether a given sentence is faulty, and in stating precisely why it is faulty.

Decide whether each of the following sentences is correct or incorrect. Explain concisely the fault in each one that is incorrect. Do not attend to mere bad taste in the choice of words unless the teacher directs you to do so. If, for instance, you find "There was two husky fellows on board," you may disregard *husky*; you must explain the erroneous *was*.

Concise explanations may be in some such form as the following models, which discuss sentences 1 and 2 of the Exercises:

1. *Team* is the subject of both *is* and *are*; *team* is referred to by both *is* and *their*.

2. *Working* is not parallel with the nouns that follow it. *Etc.* is a poor end for a sentence.

In oral recitation you will be called upon to recast the sentences according to the explanations you have made.

1. The home team is fighting their opponents, but are slowly being pushed toward their own goal.

2. He had a choice of numerous positions—such as: working in a munition factory, a book-keeper, a salesman, office boy, a Red Cross worker, timekeeper, truck-driver, etc.

3. The shops are found even in the alleys to which the boys may come and get some chocolate or warm drinks.

4. Factories are not only supplying us with amusements, but also with food and clothing.

5. Of course by saying "working for the other fellow" that does

not mean that all the former pleasures have to be given up and one settle down to do slave labor all the time.

6. Either something is wrong with my watch, or this clock is slow.

7. The principal idea in his speech was we had been robbed by being charged six dollars apiece for the chairs.

8. It would be a roomy, clean, and light place, where one might store cars with perfect assurance as to their safety, both from theft, but also from having people tinker with them.

9. After leaving Poughkeepsie the scene changes and becomes somewhat more interesting.

10. Twain pictured his character just as anyone would have lived if they were brought up in the same manner.

11. Neither the call of a coyote or the cry of a night bird broke the whispering of the wind.

12. At the court Odysseus had found a warm bed and good food because he had overthrown the beggar who had held the same position before with his athletic skill.

13. When the hole gets too deep for the steam shovels, men continue the work with spades and other implements, which, of course, is very slow and crude.

14. There was a great many more things to be seen at this wonderful plant.

15. The Red Cross sent help, not only to those who were starving in China, but cares for the Army and Navy of the United States as well.

16. Ten thousand dollars was thought by one man not too much to pay for a copy of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, which in its triviality is almost unreadable.

17. Take, for instance, the other day as I was walking down Tremont Street, I stopped in front of a large window that attracted my eye.

18. I think if federal control is ever brought about that it will be done in a very short time.

19. That night at supper I got each member of the family to write on a slip of paper the color they desired it to be.

20. Pick out something to do that will require some sacrifice, be useful, and for which you are best suited.

21. Sometimes the other boys try their hand with no better results.

22. By the terms of the Omnibus Bill California came in free, no slave trade in the District of Columbia, Utah and Nevada should decide slavery for themselves, Texas boundaries cut, but paid \$10,000,000 for the land.

23. In such times as those was it to be said that the people of the United States, the land of the free and the home of the brave, instead of dispensing with their sugar in order to feed the millions of starving mouths of Europe, should say no, but should continue to grow fat and live in luxury while their dearest cousins were out on the battlefield fighting the battles of the brave Americans?

24. There are those who never care for a beautiful landscape, but they are looking for the large business advantages.

25. Only one who has slept on such a bed knows how hard they are.

26. The wall was covered with brown wall-paper, and this in turn was covered with many pictures and so forth.

27. The train would take precedence of one hundred and seven others in meeting and passing; dispatchers and crews of every one of those said trains must be fully informed.

28. The future of our country is going to depend, not so much on what we do at home, but on the successful management of European affairs.

29. Our next question was what we were going to plant on it and where would we plant it.

30. This town can say that, as far as they know, every inhabitant is the owner of one of these stamps.

31. But the failure to do this, and knowing that the only way in which to obtain the territory was by war, brought on the war of 1845.

32. Burns also had no religion.

33. The chief told the Indians of the injuries they had suffered from the Americans, and that they would happen again unless they joined him and drove them out of the country.

34. In the event of me being elected to the board I should feel that a great responsibility was laid upon me.

35. About four miles away I can see the land, at first only a long line, and then, as we get nearer and nearer, the cliffs become more and more visible and distinct.

36. The day which we come home from a journey is not only looked on as a happy one by us, but also by our families.

37. Their boat surged on the crest of a wave, and just when it seemed impossible that she could avoid smashing on the rock, slid over it and disappeared in the fog.

38. The window abounds in presents of all kinds. Gifts that would make a small or a large boy's heart burst out in glee, and gifts that would delight a girl of any age.

39. In this connection there are two main questions: whether the custom is a good or a bad one.



40. Pieces ranging from ten feet in length by two feet in width and depth to the ordinary lath can be cut.

41. I know a woman who used to go twice every week, and almost always more than twice. When it becomes a habit such as this, I think it is very wrong, but if they could only think that it is harmful to them, they might be cured.

42. School now over and three months of vacation, I think that my best plan will be to get a place in a law office.

43. The United States has always treated the Philippines as if they were the dust under her (the United States') feet.

44. Of course we were all simply rooted to the ground with fear, when I suddenly noticed a huge muzzle over the big animal's nose.

45. Then, too, if a child is sickly, no extra work should be attempted.

46. Of an old Southern family, New York and Northern ways troubled her for some time.

47. After he gazed up and down the platform for several minutes, a young girl came rushing up to him.

48. The reason that it is not used for farming is that it is very stony.

49. The storekeeper was neither so crusty as we had supposed nor so stingy as his neighbors said.

50. Either you ought to pay him liberally for the damage or write a letter of apology.

51. The reason for this is because the partiality of the committee discourages competition.

52. They then dismounted by means of a step-ladder and advanced toward my aunt and I.

53. To Lafayette, generously enthusiastic throughout his life, liberty seems always to have signified a philanthropic idea.

54. The impurities unite with the limestone and are drawn off in the form of furnace slag after the pure iron, which, being heavier, sinks to the bottom, is taken out.

55. These illustrations give us a knowledge of current events in a much more interesting and vivid way than they would get from a daily newspaper.

56. The world today enjoys all the current events, even though they are not present at the occasions or do not read the papers, by the movies.

57. This dispatch gives us a truer appreciation and insight into the situation.

58. At six o'clock they jump out of bed. Without hesitation they

swiftly try to get their camp clothes on, when one of their shoes is missing.

59. In discussing the relations between the United States and Japan the topic naturally divides itself into two heads.

60. This stretch of road must be very disappointing to the tourist going through in an automobile after they have seen some of the fine scenery of Westchester County.

61. We purchased a nice site on the water-front of about one hundred to one hundred and seventy-five feet.

62. Throughout the nineteenth century Paris has been perhaps the most attractive capital in Europe.

63. When our columns attempted to proceed farther in order to catch the bandits, they practically protected them.

64. This nation has given them an impression that they are afraid of them.

65. The slag, which was the flux before, but now it has impurities, is then drawn off.

66. A large mill caught my eye and lots of small shanties close to it for the homes of the working men.

67. Upon entering the kitchen the cook looked up from sticking straws in the gingerbread.

68. Many other methods only give benefit to a certain few.

69. The druggists advance the argument their drink is poison.

70. From the moment we heard them plotting on the heath, we realize almost unconsciously that he must yield to their temptation.

71. Then one is set up down a little farther at the end of the boxes.

72. Not a beast or a bird was in sight anywhere, just the stretch of sand, hot, burning sand, as far as the eye could reach.

73. While I think that parties and dances are all right to a certain extent, I believe it is harmful when it is carried to excess.

74. One play was a forward pass, which was very good if we could work it, but at the same time by trying it we would be taking a big chance of losing the ball to the other side.

75. All these chimneys seemed to try to pour forth a larger amount of smoke than their neighbor.

76. An epic poem is one in which there is one central hero, and about this hero are grouped all of the incidents described in the poem.

77. Fairbanks stood before them, his cap hanging from his hands, his eyes turning from the flashing jewel to Amy's face.

78. With the great world shortage of food, I think that in no other way could I help my country more than by wielding a hoe this summer.

79. Another reason why I dislike him is because he brags about the amount of money he gives for charity.

80. Since everyone, whether rich or poor, ought to have a vacation to rest their mind and body, there must be some place where they can go.

81. The first thing we did was to send our fleet to Vera Cruz, have fifty or more of our soldiers killed by snipers, order the Mexican government to salute our flag, and when they refused, withdrew our ships and took the insult.

82. Naming them in order, they were Pitt, Fox, and Dunning.

83. The impressions received from such a play act as an aid to some people; to others it is a hindrance to their good.

84. The rocks are covered with moss and wild flowers in abundance, and sometimes where the trail has gone up the steep hill one catches sight of deep woods, often little stagnant brooks, though usually it is running water.

85. I got a heap of lemon-drops for fifteen cents that originally cost a nickel.

86. I wanted to prepare my mother a little for the news, so that she wouldn't be all torn up and miserable because she misunderstood it.

87. I rode to the station in an old wagon which nearly fell apart at every jolt which did not add to my humor.

88. Here, sleeping in the sun, is a mule and a dog; neither show the slightest curiosity at the train.

89. The boat was neither so large as we thought nor could it make as fast time as they claimed.

90. A man does not only become benefited financially by joining, but also physically.

91. Of this gruesome family, which delighted in getting itself up in sepulchral adornments, not a single one has been scratched.

92. I thought "phenomena" meant some kind of lung disease, because I had somehow confused the word with "pneumonia."

93. It was the inspiration of great teachers, and not buildings or apparatus, that drew the pick of the medical students of the country.

94. Therefore his mess-kit must be small, but not too small so as to deprive him of nourishment.

95. It naturally follows that when one takes the health of a nation into consideration, that he will find that it has been affected because the health of the individual has been.

96. Two counselors walked in front and back of each group in order to lead the way and to see that no one might get lost.

97. I am not quite clear in my mind what is meant by the "best

section" of our country—whether the most pleasant, best manufacturing sites, most productive in an agricultural way, or what.

98. All these pupils you think I suppose ought to leave high school.

99. A summer spent in camp is indeed the most wholesome and inexpensive manner of enjoying a vacation.

100. Of the less malicious habits which at present grip the world in its clutches the most powerful, I think, is the chewing-gum habit.

101. This lawlessness is caused partly by the enormous amount of uncivilized country, which always breeds thieves, and partly because of the rather rough majority of the citizens.

102. It is interesting to learn how different seeds are planted and how different plants and vegetables grow and of their respective diseases.

103. Satire is used to ridicule some particular person or thing, and probably to lower them in the estimation of others.

104. And so I continued analyzing the looks of every building and speculating on their purpose and the actions of their occupants.

105. And so when summer is closed he has his pocket full of money, his coat-sleeves bulging with muscles, and his head bulging with pride—or, in short, health, wealth, and happiness.

106. As time advanced, warfare advanced, and armies required officers who had a smart brain besides men of courage and bravery.

107. By giving all these benefits it can readily be said that the Sunday supplement has some real value.

108. Scraping off the surface, waxing it well was all it needed now.

109. In concluding I think it is safe to say that if a profitable section of the United States should be sought, that the Upper Mississippi valley would be an extremely difficult section to better.

110. The coach selects from the whole crowd those whom he thinks read their parts best.

111. Almost every school has its dramatic club, some of which are widely known.

112. Either this suspension could be passed at home or on a neighboring farm.

113. The Mississippi River is a real tidal stream, with constant change of level, running through two complete cycles every twenty-four hours.

114. In our high school a whole credit is given for gardening carried on through the summer, providing they follow a few rules issued by the government.

115. Surely our home must resemble a bird's nest in one respect, doesn't it?

116. Upon approaching the city the eye is attracted by glaring signs advertising all kinds of things.

117. On the floor was placed a few small rugs—and the room was finished.

118. I hung up the curtains which did not seem an easy task.

119. One does not see a single living object over the whole stretch except a few birds.

120. Not only was it terrible for a Christian to fall in love with a Jewess, but Du Bois Guilbert was a Templar, which made the crime all the worse in the eyes of that country.

121. To the student of Shakespeare much benefit can be obtained by seeing the plays on the stage.

122. Then military training takes the place of the physical exercises not only in the preference of boys' minds, but even their health being considered.

123. Many cars are needed for the farmers, so that a large crop might be moved.

124. Over the town rose the belfry of the college, the square, brown tower of the church, and the slim, yellow spire of the parish meeting-house.

125. At most theaters at least once in every two or three weeks a very good picture is shown, when it is a splendid opportunity for people to learn about a new book.

126. First you will see a sprout here, and then a sprout there, until at last the garden is full of them.

127. It may be quite all right for a person to attend them once in a while, but it is a very bad thing for them to form the habit.

128. We ought, therefore, to form no lazy habit as regards ourselves, thereby giving no example of it to our children.

129. Everybody wears their old clothes.

130. At the blast of the whistle the spectators give a sigh of mixed relief for the end of the strain of excitement and chagrin because their enjoyment in watching the game has been cut short.

131. Behind the grating seems to be one chaos of ledgers and file-cases to those who are not used to a big business office.

132. Everyone was intently eating their ice-cream.

133. In summer these people have vacations, and there has to be some people to fill their places.

134. When a person rides through our state, especially in the industrial sections, they are continually going through factory towns.

135. This act did not free any negroes in the border states and in Delaware and Louisiana.

136. When the furnace is full of this material, it is set on fire.
137. This new plan of distribution has both helped the newsboys and their patrons very much.
138. We have held aloof and have only given our aid or used our power when there was imminent danger.
139. One of my pastimes during a ride in a trolley is to try to place each person in the class he belongs.
140. The foremost question in the minds of the average boy or girl is "What shall I do?"
141. If the Teutons had gained the victory, not only would the United States, but also the rest of the world, have been set back.
142. As a general type of a good collection of books for young people I think the library in our school would serve as a good example.
143. We really seem to erect handsomer buildings for cottons, woolens, and steam engines than for doctors, lawyers, and parsons.
144. The hanging rings are the gymnasium delight, for on them they can perform many tricks of skill.
145. At this time of year there is commonly very little to occupy the minds and thoughts of school boys or girls, and thus, by having a competition to make the society, and then with the work after one has made it in preparing for the presentation of the play, much valuable time is put to good use which otherwise might have been wasted away in a needless manner.
146. If next year's senior class has their way, the ruling will be changed.
147. When told what the bonds were and that the United States was in back of them, the people bought as much as possible.
148. I must have so many two-by-fours cut to such a length with a notch here and a peg there.
149. Then I noticed a woman whom I supposed was her mother.
150. But should anyone try it for a whole month, I am sure they would very soon alter their opinion.
151. Having cooled, a gang of men known as "strippers" came along and removed the iron sides from the now solid mixture.
152. It is neither quaint nor is it magnificent; just plain, ordinary comfort and tidiness combined.
153. A man ought to work quietly and steadily, to do no unnecessary thing to attract attention; by working quietly you accomplish a great deal more and your work is done much better.
154. These flags have been bought by each member of the graduating class, for a small fee apiece, but when taken altogether will make quite a large sum.

155. On coming through Haddon Woods this vacant piece of property suddenly "hits you in the face," to use a figurative phrase.

156. Here is a part of a motor lorry, which was hit squarely, and which was filled with reserves.

157. From this labor he derives much useful training and experience, as well as being of service to his country.

158. If he looks upon the world in the right manner, he will gain a large outlook on life. But the greatest advantage of all is that of serving your country.

159. Now and then a tall smokestack reared its head high in air, belching forth clouds of smoke and flame. These became more and more frequent as we approached the central parts of town.

160. To obtain credit for canning done during the summer months the girls must bring ten jars of five different kinds of fruit canned by themselves to the school next fall.

161. Casual readers frequently declare that spiritualistic mediums never give us anything but twaddle.

162. Several times the crimson team had tried to drop-kick, but each time it fell short.

163. We have only one meet, and for some fellow who may be strong and not at all athletic to win a third perhaps in the shot-put, and then is given a letter which he can sport around, does not seem quite right to the fellow who works hard for two months in hockey or basketball.

164. Not being large enough for a bedroom, I decided to use my new room as a study and sitting room.

165. For every fruit one must pay an enormous price in the Eastern states, but in California they are plentiful for nothing.

166. The result is that the average Mexican has a very false idea of the United States; I suppose they think that they could easily send an army across our border and defeat us.

167. Hamlet decided to have the players give a scene similar to that one when his father was poisoned.

168. He has a car of his own which he can only drive around at night because he is not of age for a license.

169. If Russia could have produced one great man in this crisis, it would become one state with a republican constitution.

170. And finally there are the "Saturday nighters," who come just because it is Saturday night or any other night, and it is dull sitting on the porch, or some other such excellent reason.

171. As soon as this is done, the corn is ready to cut. This is done by hand, and it is stacked in the field.

172. Arnold has learned that there is no need of haste to acquire a fortune and the material things of life, but living peacefully close to nature, to work on things which will develop his spiritual life, and so enable him to write things which survive the life of man.

173. We decided to go in and look at the furniture. On entering the man told us he had some very beautiful curly maple.

174. The crops are also cut by a special machine, which binds it into bunches.

175. That the majority of criminals are mentally defective is not at all the opinion of the best authorities.

176. In the fall, when the leaves begin to turn to the marvelous colors which only nature can make, it is the signal for our departure.

177. The military officer of today must be of good moral character, have the ability of getting along well with his men, being a sort of "pal" at times, thus being able to give his orders with the knowledge that they will be carried out.

178. It will not be necessary for each one of us to think of missionary work in Armenia or Abyssinia. However, there is plenty of missionary work in the United States to be done.

179. He has also written books where the characters are not Scotch.

180. He is an author of our time whom I believe ought to be appreciated by school-children.

181. Not only the Red Cross requires clerical work, but there are many branches of the War Department which need volunteers.

182. Beginning with the youngest child, which happens to be a girl, she is only seven.

183. Now the mirror went back again—not to its original position, but to hang lengthwise over a dressing-table.

184. The loss of Edward King, who was drowned, and whom Lycidas is supposed to represent, is referred to in the last line.

185. I have known several professors of pedagogy who were excellent companions at billiards or at bridge, and one or two with whom I could enjoy a conversation on the topics of common life.

186. I don't believe anyone would be mean enough to use the luxuries and let the laborers in the factories go without because they wanted to have a treat.

187. North claimed the colonists were a property of England. They had a right to tax them.

188. Entering the store, it was a joyous sight to see a bunch of girls gathered around the counter.

189. I made white Dutch curtains, mother helped me of course, and stenciled the edge in a simple pattern.



190. The boys from the outside buildings come hustling up, carrying their suitcases, and their clothes have been all pressed, and they are all looking their very best.

From this point the exercises contain some of the faulty compound sentences described in Chapters XIV and XV.

191. In speaking of the great irrigation projects of the West a recent editorial declared that these were not political interests.

192. Let the men from twenty on have the other positions; they are more mature, and consequently better able to fill them.

193. When I heard that we were going to move into a new house, I was excited and much pleased; but when I was told that I could have my choice of one of three rooms for myself, I was highly elated.

194. The principal, although he had a strong suspicion, could not doubt his word, so dismissed him, telling him to send Allan in, thinking that this boy would surely tell the truth, and Allan would have, had not Jack on passing out the door told him that he had lied.

195. I spent my last summer in this manner with my brother, and although it was hard at first, we soon managed to make ourselves comfortable.

196. Next morning we awoke in a land of paradise and where everyone pronounces their *r*'s.

197. Of course she was the same as all girls, and she blushed real red when she saw us looking at her, and it is my opinion that she did not enjoy the soda at all which she was drinking.

198. When looking at the village from a distant ridge, the first thing that catches one's eyes is the red water-tower.

199. His activities have affected the school in a great many ways, and I'm inclined to think it has done it more good than harm.

200. Do you think a dog could follow the wagon that let this drop by his nose?

201. The Persian army met the Greeks at Thermopylæ, in which battle the Greeks were defeated by treachery.

202. Then comes the bursting point for both the soldier's great happiness and for that of his family—the arrival at home.

203. We see wonderful pictures of the drama, comedy pictures, and every kind of emotion is depicted.

204. She sat down at a table where everyone could see her when they entered or left.

205. We must all feel that this is our business and we are in it to succeed, and each one should feel as though it is his duty to do as much as possible.

206. A periodic sentence is a sentence that is not loose and that the emphasized part comes last.

207. Then I thought of the crime that had been committed at this place, and a cold shiver ran down my back, and, picking up my pack, I started off again, wishing to put a good distance between me and this haunted spot.

208. At first there are quite a few who can't swim a stroke, but they are always eager to learn, and it's not very long before they can swim like ducks.

209. Perhaps those wheat-fields would not have seemed so dreary if I had only been on an express train.

210. The window had indeed a very interesting display, and one could see many new things unobserved at the first glance by looking over the articles a second time.

211. The city seems now, not like a cramped prison, but rather as a giant fortress who stands ready to protect her people.

212. In the first car I went were some of my friends.

213. Everyone of us can make ourselves more useful.

214. Before I stood there five minutes, the waves were coming up to my feet.

215. At last the dog was nearing, bearing his precious burden, and when about twenty feet out, I rushed out to assist in whatever way I could.

216. If anyone could suggest a sensible and practical scheme for obtaining a world peace, they would be doing an invaluable service to mankind.

217. At that time the lights flickered horribly, but people did not notice it.

218. Around a street-faker one always finds a strange mixture of people, and it is a curious gathering that I am about to describe.

219. Everybody knows that you can't do a thing well unless your heart is in it, and in times like these poor workers would be the biggest kind of handicap to their employers.

220. There are many things that can be done which will be helpful.

221. The very ground is soaked in the blood of these valiant fighters.

222. Each child demanded a "vanilly" ice-cream cone. When they obtained them, they began to lick off the ice-cream by sticking their tongues way out.

223. At the station the guests clamber out of the crowded stages and, loaded down with baggage, walk over to the station platform and after purchasing their tickets eagerly await the coming of the train which is to take them back to civilization.

224. A coverlet for the couch is of rose-color on one side and electric on the other with metallic trimming and cut in a semi-circle at the top to fit the neck with heavy tassels at its point to weigh it down.

225. While walking around 59th Street yesterday about eleven o'clock, Old Sol began to send down his merciless hot rays on the city.

226. After they have found how quickly and pleasantly the nights pass, they go more often; until in a very short time it becomes a habit.

227. The other haughty prisoner, at whose request I had stayed, seemed neither ashamed of his situation nor surprised at my visit.

228. Others took work from the school home to do.

229. There are difficulties in the way of such a congress, and the biggest would be the jealousy between the nations.

230. That class of people who know nothing about these ground-schools have an idea that it is a pleasure resort for fellows who have nothing else to do.

231. The children come from all five directions, and it is a pretty sight to see them hopping and skipping along.

232. Retreat was sounded at four o'clock, and it was always a welcome signal.

233. Taken as a whole, everyone was satisfied with the result.

234. This course is given with demonstrations, and each person learns the different ways of bandaging.

235. He looks furtively around the room as if either looking for some means of escape, or perhaps he is looking for something on which to fix his gaze, something that will make him appear utterly indifferent and calm.

236. He is not the only child so influenced, and I do not think it is right to mold the taste of children in such a way.

237. Having earned a big raise in salary, my coming home from the office was indeed a great joy to me.

238. It is common knowledge that a man's working power is lowered who smokes.

239. I think we can classify him as the type of man that, the harder we try to please him and give him special marks of attention, the more unmanageable and discourteous he becomes.

240. The above process is called the "cut-around" process, and there are two other ways of removing the pits.

241. Occasionally he passed a house along the river at which he could see a priest walking back and forth in the little garden in front.

242. Among the rich it progressed even more rapidly than among the middle class, but when it reached the poorer class it swept it off its feet.

243. We have a school paper published every month, and the editors of this paper gave twenty-five dollars to the fund.

244. The rocky soil can only be conquered and made to bring forth fruit by the most untiring struggle.

245. The letter contained an invitation for me to visit them, but I think I shall wait until there is better connection with the outside world.

246. He could neither free himself by tugging at the knots nor was he able to wriggle out of them.

247. Looking from the car window, not a tree was visible.

248. The outside of the building is of boards on the first floor, shingles around the second floor, and the roof is of slate.

249. When I visited his office, he was not there, but he came in later.

250. Children usually do not like to read, and they like to see things happen, as usually occurs in a moving picture.

251. In the main hall there is the post office, the lunch room, and a grocery shop.

252. The crowd was one mass of life and color enjoying one of the few things which brings all classes and ages together, the soda fountain.

253. It is two or three years since I read *Travels with a Donkey*, but there is one scene which I remember better than all the rest.

254. These places lend just a little touch of home to the soldiers that they have not had perhaps for months.

255. Over there across the road are the bodies of horses who have been caught in this barrage, and have been thrown aside in order to let the traffic pass on.

256. The village was situated in a valley through which one of our useful rivers flow.

257. Of course there are a few persons each day that have to either loiter on the street or in a house of this kind.

258. So we find that this wonderful country offers, not only extensive opportunities, but is also blessed with a climate which makes it a delightful place to live.

259. And he well deserves but little affection.

260. Two men with canthooks now pry the logs loose, and they (the logs) roll down the slope into the water.

261. When cotton is being picked, the fiber is likely to be injured if there are heavy rains or long-continued periods of dampness.

262. There are two car-lines that take you there—and bring you back, of course—but the B. R. T. is by far the most popular.

263. We know that when we give our money or aid to this organization, that help is going to be given where help is required.

264. These men had to be the best mentally as well as physically, and examinations had to be introduced, so that they might eliminate those who were unfit.

265. The women have done a great deal of work making presents and souvenirs of different kinds for the children, and relief work at the various settlements.

266. I think people ought to be taught to love it and understand it, and they will never regret having done so.

267. The relations of Chile and the United States have never been what even might be called cordial.

268. The majority of huts are hollowed in the hills, which manner of construction leaves only the entrance to the watchful eye of the curious visitor.

269. We had talked for about ten minutes, when his baby sister began to cry, and to my ears it was certainly not very musical.

270. I was surprised when I studied its manufacture how many operations were necessary before the "pegs" were ready to be worked in the different ways.

271. Together we hurried downstairs and caught the train. But we got to Berkeley only just in time to connect with the Overland.

272. On the top of this bureau were pictures of some friends of mine and other articles.

273. His father all the more resolved that he would not suffer Harry to venture upon this cruel world, and be forced to struggle along as he (his father).

274. In order that the boy might do this the gymnasium should be equipped with a swimming-pool.

275. No one can read Noyes with the intention of doing him justice without being impressed by his worship of the beautiful.

276. The park is becoming less and less a poor man's resort, for the advent of the moving picture has attracted him by the million away from it.

277. One of the greatest joys in going away for a visit is the home-coming.

278. There are no footprints upon the sand of either man or beast.

279. From the ceiling fall paper snow-flakes, which scene, lighted with brilliant, variously colored lights, offers a dazzling spectacle of beauty.

280. Now there is only torn papers, sweepings, rubbish, and mud.

281. There are not only Y. M. C. A. buildings in this country, but there are some in the larger French cities

282. The different sounds reveal the lively atmosphere of Madison, and by the tooting of automobile horns and the rumbling of wagons on the stone road it makes one feel as though he is in some busy city.

283. They cannot leave the young members of the family at home, so they are dressed and taken along to the restaurants, so learning to enjoy them early.

284. When two days later his brand-new canoe arrived, and a large rip had been made in the side during the shipping, he swore up and down that that was his last trip on any river.

285. Each one that was carried to "La Guillotine" in those little carts and that lost their lives that the people might be free was glad the end came so quickly.

286. Vulcan built the dwellings in Olympus; he made the scepter of Jove, the spears of the gods, Diana's arrows, and the shield of Achilles.

287. If there were no such thing as hunger, and if food did not taste good, perhaps a person might not eat until he was near death.

288. Mother, seeing me coming, cried out to ask the reason, and having told her, she immediately ran to the pantry and procured what my sister had forgotten. I opened my lunchbox; she put it in, and then, having closed it, I ran for the car, my heart thumping with running and the fear of missing it.

289. The prairie was nearly flat, very few swells to break the monotony, and not a single tree.

290. It is a strip of country some two hundred miles in length, but varying in width from twenty feet to ten miles.

291. You might suppose that adding fifty per cent of milk to the butter would make it worse; and yet it makes it all the better.

292. The most confusing part of the cross-roads was the lack of a guide-board. Since we were the nearest farm to this point, we were pestered continually by people asking the way.

293. Everyone living in cottages which were practically in the same yard, there being no fences, this poodle was always around making friends with everybody on the Point.

294. Perhaps opium or morphine would take the place of alcohol to such individuals.

295. There is yet another kind of boy of which the world is full of.

296. Surely there is a lot of jobs for either one.

297. Girls live over the sentimental love-scenes that they have seen enacted when they reach home.

298. I will neither have anything to do with him myself or will I allow you to.

299. Here he became acquainted with a great many young men whom he thought needed moral guidance.

300. Not until the year 1863 Congress passed any act that freed some of the slaves.

301. Her beaming face and amusing chatter is always a source of great enjoyment to everyone.

302. It is now more necessary than ever that a man should be as efficient a worker as possible. However, the tobacco-habit lessens man's mental and physical power.

303. Another pleasure of the Adirondacks are the beautiful mountains.

304. Boys with aprons of immaculate whiteness glide swiftly over the tiled floor, bearing trays on which tall glasses with white or colored foam on top are seen with a couple of straws lying on the side.

305. Quiet work accomplishes more than if it was noised about.

306. This under-sea craft is capable not only of running for lengthy periods under water, but may also obtain a view of objects above the surface.

307. Flowers and streams are nowhere to be found, which all tend to make a place agreeable to the human eye.

308. These I am glad to say they were accepted.

309. The window-panes were broken, and they were boarded up.

310. Here women and girls prepare goodies and ditty-bags to be sent to the sailors, and also reading-matter is collected and sent to the sailors.

311. My hasty glance traveled over the antiques which I should have loved to have examined.

312. We had done so well in these two drives that our principal said we would not hold any more campaigns this year, but when the Red Cross drive started we felt that we must do something, so an auction was held of the fifty posters which had been hung about the walls of our corridors.

313. Let the officers continue to come from among those whose training and education obviously fits them to command.

314. He would have to give up his athletic activities unless he goes to a summer camp.

315. It was great, too, to see the finished product. A small dam, so situated that it could hold back as much as eight million cubic feet of water.

316. Then the farmers start coming by in automobiles, and one boy at a time are picked up by these different farmers.

317. How can we be on good terms with a nation consisting mostly, not all, of people like that?

- 318. Lumbering and fishing is carried on a great deal in my state.
- 319. The school itself is a small school, being on the top of a high hill and looking down into the valley toward the town. However, when the call comes for some aid to charity, everybody is eager to do their little bit to help out.
- 320. In a school where there is only about three hundred we can be much better acquainted.
- 321. A great deal of money is expended in this work which could be used to better advantage in another way.
- 322. I received a note from a neighboring farmer that he could supply the milk I needed.
- 323. Beginning early in the morning until late at night one can see people standing in front or inside waiting for their appointment.
- 324. He is at once known to be a traveling salesman, even if he did not have the suitcase.
- 325. Then, too, the flickering of the pictures are very bad for the eyes.
- 326. In adopting military training in the schools I do not mean to build up a military autocracy as Germany, but I do maintain that preparedness is the only known method of putting it down and in conquering the enemies of freedom and justice.
- 327. My uncle was waiting to take me across the city to the station from where my train was to go.
- 328. Although the spirit of buying thrift stamps has not been as great as possible, yet I think it was a success in many ways.
- 329. Now we see that the time is not only ripe, but it is of absolute necessity that a national enactment be passed.
- 330. It was to keep Dunstan quiet that made Godfrey consent to sell his horse Wildfire.

Sentences 331-351 are examples of queer twists of thought or phrasing. The faults do not correspond exactly to the classifications given in the previous chapters.

- 331. Individually nothing can be accomplished; but together the greatest power on earth will be thrown down.
- 332. Some methods of mining are more expensive than others, and so the value of the ore depends somewhat on the cost of mining it.
- 333. They have no scruples about changing from one side to the other, as they do it quite often.
- 334. And then, to put aside the picture of education, we see that New Orleans is indeed the most interesting city to live in.
- 335. At camp, just when the sun seemed brightest and the water



warmest, we would hear the much-hated call of "time" from the pier. The swim to shore from the raft was always the best if we were a little late and knew that time had been called.

336. It is a very large family and lives on an extensive ranch in the west.

337. One day, having nothing better to do, I thought I saw an automobile coming up the drive.

338. This family is a very interesting one to study because of the difference of some of the members.

339. If you should look up a river here on the map, you would find marks indicating that there was a log-cabin there.

340. All about us are people who merely exist and not live.

341. Our mind does not need to work, and this is very bad for it. If we want to rest our mind, the best thing to do is to sleep, but to do something which is neither rest nor work is bad for it.

342. Those who take up positions as office-boys, clerks, or the like, gain more character than their lazier friends; they develop an air of responsibility.

343. All the chairs were so hard and shiny and slippery that from the way they looked it was more comfortable to stand than to sit.

344. Although farming is not easy work, one can easily learn the most common duties about a farm and become a skilled worker. However, as farming is real hard work, many undoubtedly prefer lighter work, as driving an ambulance.

345. All one can see is this deserted land grown up with trees on both sides of the road. But after traveling most of the afternoon we came near Atlantic City, and I noticed how low and marshy the land was near the ocean.

346. It is quite a sight to stand here and look across the lake.

347. Every member of the gang became quiet in an instant, although with great envy toward Percy.

348. Although it is one of the most dangerous kinds of work that can be engaged in, driving logs is one of the most exciting of all occupations.

349. She has a temper that, when excited, is best to keep away from. I have often seen her spank her girl and boy, and then take them in her arms to kiss them.

350. Seeing them eating made me hungry, so I thought it was time for me to be leaving and get something for myself.

351. Although these industries that I have named are all in Indiana, nevertheless there are a great many in the other states of the Ohio Valley.

## PART FOUR

### WORDS

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#### CHAPTER XVIII

#### WORDS IN RELATION TO OTHER WORDS

##### A. BAD REPETITION

We have come to the boundary between (1) words as parts of a whole and (2) words considered by themselves. For example, Chapter XVII showed how the mismanagement of *with* phrases produced a comical repetition—"with his frozen fingers with a can with a screw top." Another illustration of the same species of fault would have been this sentence:

They wanted to get away from the place *for a while for a good time*.

The repetition of two *for* phrases makes the sentence sound like a joke. Worse still is the next writer's carelessness in twice repeating *before*.

About two weeks *before* school is over the boy begins to count the days of hard study that are *before* him *before* he leaves for home.

We say that the writers have mismanaged certain parts of their sentences so as to produce a laughable sound.

They have carelessly repeated their prepositions. Any unintentional repetition of a word or syllable is likely to spoil a sentence by giving a humorous twist.

My couch was covered with Indian blankets and piled *high* with *highly* colored pillows.

My friend is very much interested in the *coming outcome* of this measure.

No matter how long he has *waited* to be *waited* on, he is seldom impatient.

Such oddities are not so numerous as to be serious; they result from accidents that may happen in the best-regulated sentences. They might not be worth our attention if they were not a symptom of deafness to the sound of all sentences. We ought to learn to "hear" our thoughts before they are committed to paper; oral training can be doubly valuable by teaching us to hear. An ear that does not catch those jangles of repetition will be deaf to a kind of fault that is a thousand times more common, more harmful, and more inexcusable.

Thoughtless repetition of words is a major crime according to the statutes of spoken or written English. The following sentence—if it were the only evidence we had against the writer—is enough to prove that he is untrained:

*In order to cultivate this vast land irrigation ditches have had to be built in order to irrigate the country.*

A reader knows instantly from that sample the lack of ability in other ways: the writer will make monotonous compound sentences, formless written paragraphs, and a straggling oral composition. The fault is far deeper than the mere unpleasant repetition of words. It is heedlessness. The writer has no conception of what his composition sounds like, in either its small or its large elements. In all probability his mind is capable and could learn to compose well; but so long as it thoughtlessly repeats, it is judged incapable and is known to be untrained. The next writer is known by the one sample of his work to be uneducated.

Everything was fine until we left the *train* at a *small town* to *board* a *small train* to go to the *town* where the quarry was. The *train* we *boarded* was a freight *train* with one coach on it, and it was very dirty.

If we showed that boy his four "trains" and his "small town and small train" and his "board a train and train we boarded," he would condemn himself. He could hardly believe his eyes and ears. He would say that he "didn't notice" or "didn't think." We can forgive ignorance and can sympathize with weakness, but we cannot tolerate the sleepy inattention. The repetition is produced by a person who shuts his ears and eyes; his recklessness or laziness will lead him to errors of all other kinds.

A specially unforgivable kind of lazy duplication is seen in the second sentence of the following:

They had promised to have *the car* ready for us by *the next morning*, as we had planned an early start for San Luis. So *the next morning* we got *the car*.

The writer is unwilling to exert himself to say new things in new sentences, but tells us of "the car next morning, next morning the car." He has not taken the trouble to listen to his words.

This artless repetition is almost sure to be found in any passage that is faulty otherwise. Look at paragraph number 12, page 199, and see how that wandering introduction uses "room of her own, my own room, which room, which room, many rooms."

That word *room* seems to have the most irresistible sound in the English language, for only a well-trained and resolute student can write about a room without saying "room, room, room, room, room"—until a reader is amazed, and then angry, and finally wearied. Intelligent young people have frequently put eight "rooms" or "houses" or "bricks" on one page; ten recurrences of one noun are not the world's record by any means. Certain common verbs have the knack of planting themselves half a dozen times in a paragraph. The most powerful ones are *take*, *get*, and *fix*.

Thoughtless repetition will never cure itself. Many professional writers, who feel that long training has freed them from elementary errors, are always afraid of finding in their writing some unexpected and disagreeable duplication of words. They

know that if the mind is running on "factor," the word is likely to occur too often; that if "persistent" has given a pleasant impression to a writer by fitting in well, the word is likely to slide in again too soon. Trained authors have no fear of finding a word unpleasantly dropping in three times too often on a page, but they are always apprehensive of its coming once too often.

High-school writers have most need to dread the thoughtless recurrence within a sentence:

In early years the *petroleum* was *carried* in oil-cars or barrels, but now a thousand miles of pipe-line for *carrying petroleum* spread like a net over the United States to *carry* the oil to the refineries.

To object to "*in* early years was *carried in* oil-cars" would be fussy; still the repetition is worth noticing and worth avoiding if other prepositions would do as well. The recurrence of *carry* is a quite different matter, as could be proved by reading the sentence to the writer with an emphasis upon *carried*, *carrying*, *carry*. He would at once agree that he had been careless. The same proof would hold in the following sentences:

The ovens of the modern baking-*plant* are one of the most interesting factors of the whole *plant*.

Every night there is *some sort of* amusement in the huts, either moving pictures or *some sort of* concert.

The condenser consists of a pipe *running* up and down and cooled by *running* water flowing over it.

To *give* this committee the power to enforce any measures which it had passed, the school authorities *gave* it the right to punish any student who wilfully broke those measures.

We feel no unpleasant effect from "any measures" and "any student," because they are considerably separated and because they specify the provisions in a definite way; nor do we dislike the second "measures"—in fact we like it, because it makes the reference unmistakable, instead of relying upon a weak and confusing "them." In the case of "give" and "gave" the sensation is disagreeable; for here is a verb modified by its own infinitive in a somewhat lazy way, like saying, "To *give* it power they *gave* it the right."

## B. GOOD REPETITION

There is nothing wrong with repetition if for any purpose—even a slight or debatable one—a writer desires to repeat. If we can detect anything like purpose, we are pleased to have a noun or a verb or an adjective come again and again. Repetition for emphasis has always been a favorite device of authors; repetition for linking or for the avoidance of obscure pronouns is always praiseworthy. Here is the close of one of Lowell's sentences and the beginning of the next:

. . . the constant return toward equilibrium and *repose* in his later poems. And it is a *repose* always lofty and clear-aired.

Lowell would have been ambiguous if he had tried to refer to one of the nouns by an unsupported *it*, and would not have drawn our attention to "that added quality of his repose." Macaulay is fond of repeating for clearness or emphasis. So was Burke, as in this illustration:

Far different has been our policy *hitherto*. *Hitherto* we have invited our people to fixed establishments.

Burke wished to intensify the idea of what had been done *in the prosperous past*. This next writer designed to fasten in our minds the contrast between "saying this" and "saying this in print."

That *is* not *said* very much *in print*, for *in print* it has a bad look; but it *is being said* privately all over the country.

There may be wisdom in bringing forward the same word again and again in successive sentences, if the reader is to be informed that "this one idea ought to be unmistakably before you." Successive sentences may—even through a series of five or six—be exactly similar in form, repeating certain words, if an author feels that he can better secure his effect by that extreme method. Repetition for a purpose is convenient, pleasant, artistic.

Thoughtless repetition of *room* or *plant* or *fix* is the baneful opposite of all that is artistic in writing. The contrast between

no purpose and some purpose comes out in the following pair of sentences:

In such a community, with no school-house and no other place of meeting than the *village* inn, the center of this *village* life is in the *village* tavern. Men of the town come here every day and hold discussions about *trivial* matters in *trivial* ways, while they swap their stories and smoke their pipes.

Repeating "village" is pure thoughtlessness; repeating "trivial" emphasizes the pettiness of it all.

For emphasis or for greater clearness we should never be afraid to use a word a second time. Students who are over-conscientious may blunder by not repeating. Fear of writing "meal" twice has produced a queer result in the next sentence.

I was attempting to acquire the nutriment of a twenty-cent meal from a ten-cent.

If a noun is needed for any reason, it may be fearlessly used. Compared with lazy or decapitated sentences, a repetitious sentence is admirable. But a sentence that happens to contain repeated words, that happens to use the same noun three times because the writer was careless, that happens to use a verb twice because the writer was indifferent—a sentence in which words happen along as many times as they like is the infallible sign of an undisciplined intellect. (Can you guess why there are four "happens" in the last sentence?)

### C. UNNECESSARY WORDS

**Not logic, but custom.** The use of the needless words described in the following seven sections is called "redundancy." Redundancy is not in itself a fault. English authors have frequently had occasion to pile up adjectives for their artistic purposes: Shakespeare makes Hamlet say, "How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable," and has the Archbishop of Canterbury speak of the King's "sweet and honeyed sentences." A theme reader who found "sweet and honeyed" in a composition

could make fun of it as a redundant use of adjectives. So we could logically make fun of the redundancy in many literary idioms: "fall down," "mount up," "a little tiny boy," "sharpened to a fine point." A logical person who wanted to exercise his mind could find in any classic dozens of expressions that are redundant, and could show how unnecessary some of the words are. That kind of reasoning is poor judgment. Language is not made by logic, but by custom; if redundancy is in accordance with custom, it is good. Redundancy in words is bad only when it is contrary to good usage, when it makes a writer seem uneducated. The faults spoken of in sections 1-7 are not wrong because of the *reasons* we can give against them, but because they are not literary forms, because they sound queer to educated people.

**1. Adjectives and adverbs.** The piling up of adjectives and adverbs is discussed in Chapter XXV. Here we have to notice only those repetitions that come from a straining effort to overpower a reader with the horror or the beauty of some description.

It was *indescribably* awful—a wailing sound like the cry of a loon heard from afar. It is utterly *impossible to attempt to describe* that sound.

After saying that the sound was indescribable, the writer makes an attempt to describe it, and then says that the attempt is impossible because the sound is indescribable. He has tried to curdle our blood with horror, and has succeeded only in tiring us. The heaping up of fearsome adjectives may make us smile; a series of emphatic adverbs may destroy emphasis.

The story is gruesome in the extreme and *inconceivably supernatural*. My friend was *plainly* in a quandary. Then something happened that was *extremely* lucky for him: Finch's mother became *seriously* sick.

When an artist reaches an exciting point in his story, he is likely to be sparing of modifiers and to use plain nouns and verbs, as in the following description of a scene in a barn at the close of a duel:



Dyer, very still and stern, watched that limp figure; and when Hawkes came in he said quietly: "I've killed him." Then he slid his revolver into his holster.

**2. Large and cumbersome modifiers.** If a subject is petty, it cannot be dignified by the piling up of large phrases.

Since my salary will be but eighteen dollars a week, *the means whereby I shall live seem unable to be found.*

In the next sentence the clause and the phrase are a barrier that keeps us from the simple meaning that "there are many disadvantages in such an investment."

There are a great many disadvantages *that one may have in connection with* such an investment.

The writer has not selected the few necessary words, but has allowed confusing modifiers to sprawl about as they like. So in the next example we see vague and superfluous modifiers that form a haze between us and the thought—whatever that may have been.

The school spirit *in its conduct* has declined, but the school spirit *in its regard for our alumni* and for our schoolmates who have left us has brought about *a wonderful feeling for the value of the school which we attend.*

If a thought has been expressed in five words, it ought not to be repeated immediately, as in the following sentence:

There are many other necessities *which are needed.*

When we find sentences of the form "there are . . . that are" or "there is . . . which is," we are likely to feel that we have encountered thoughtlessness. Some of the expressions most likely to cause repetitious modifying are *in regard to, with respect to, the means of.*

**3. Repeated ideas.** An author may, for emphasis, repeat an idea in successive words or phrases: "in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye"; "a complete and utter rout"; "higher still and higher"; "a stoppage of stone, blocking the way." Such repeti-

tions are unusual, and occur in passages which show that the writer designed to reduplicate the idea for a peculiar purpose. In high-school writing the repetition of an idea is usually the result of a careless flow of words. Is it likely that any student approves of the following pairs?

immediately, directly afterwards  
 in consecutive years, one after another  
 completely and entirely finished  
 simultaneously at the same time  
 popular with the people  
 a dark, black night  
 his strong and powerful arm  
 a dead corpse  
 a little small room  
 all the surf and breakers  
 at 10:45 p. m. in the evening  
 so, as a result  
 the first beginnings

The most common of these duplicated meanings is "a true fact." What people have in mind when they speak of "the truth of a fact" has never been discovered. The technical name for this sort of error is "tautology," meaning "saying the same thing again." It is not a prevalent fault in school writing, but, when it does occur, imparts a taint to a whole sentence.

One kind of tautology is ungrammatical.

This *man* on our left *he* couldn't keep still.

**4. Repeated *a*.** The indefinite article likes to slip in where it does not belong, especially in the following expressions; the unnecessary *a* or *an* is italicized:

After *a* half an hour he appeared.

He couldn't get *a* hold of it.

This is a kind of *a* novelty.

That was a sort of *a* surprise.

There must be an *a* before *kind* and *sort*; there ought not to be an *a* or *an* after those words; we ought to say: "a kind of novelty, a sort of surprise."

**5. False double verbs.** In certain common expressions two verbs are used where only one is needed, or where a verb and an infinitive are in better taste.

He went *and* bought a hammer.

Next you take *and* multiply by 5.

Don't you ever stop *and* think?

Try *and* lift the other end.

The writer starts in *and* says.

This use of *and* is not wrong (indeed "try and" may be found in literature); but it has always been in disfavor and is likely to give an effect of carelessness.

**6. Double conjunctions.** A little *so* or *but* or *still* is a powerful enough hinge for the turning of the weightiest ideas; the little adverbs do not need to be ornamented with pompous polysyllables that carry no load.

We had had enough; *so accordingly* we refused his offer.

*But* there is, *however*, another consideration.

I was half frozen; *still, nevertheless*, I pretended that I enjoyed the ride.

The Latin word *et* means "and"; *etc.* means "and all the rest." Therefore to say "and etc." is super-tautology.

**7. Unnecessary *as*.** A little *as* may often be found tucked in before a predicate nominative, where it is an impertinence.

These may be termed *as* agnostics.

The little girl was considered *as* a great treasure by her uncle.

*Termed* and *considered* should be directly followed by the predicate noun.

#### D. PREPOSITIONS

**1. Fixed idioms.** The misuses of prepositions might be treated in Chapter XIX under "the meanings of words" if prepositions had definite meanings. But these joining words are in themselves so vague, their meaning depends so much on the words with which they are used, that we can discuss them only

in these combinations—in phrases. Phrases are usually peculiar and idiomatic—that is, not depending on the logical meaning of a preposition plus the meaning of its object, but having a special meaning that custom has given to the combination. For example, it is idiomatic to say, “His prayers were *of no avail*,” and hence it would be logically correct to say, “We tried hard, but *of no avail*”; yet the logic leads to absurdity. The fact of usage is that “of no avail” in the second sentence is not customary; it is manufactured English; it stands out on a written page as a queer bit of ignorant boggling. A foreigner learning English could argue for expressions like these: “but of no result,” “but of no success,” “but of no avail.” We can only smile at his arguments, because his phrases are not part of our language; they have an outlandish sound. The fact of our idiom is that we use *without* in those expressions; we are accustomed to “without result,” “without success,” “without avail.”

**2. Unfamiliar idioms.** Young people detect a violation of common idiom even more quickly than older people do. They need no instruction from a textbook as to how most prepositional phrases are used in their own native language. But in certain cases—like “of no avail”—they are only partially acquainted with a literary idiom, and apply phrases in wrong senses. They seldom coin unidiomatic phrases as long as they are writing naturally; but are in danger of making an error when they attempt to use abstract nouns in unfamiliar constructions—for example: “What objection have the men *for* not wanting the women to vote?” The writer was used to the common and familiar idiom, “a reason for not”; he carelessly slipped in the noun *objection* in place of *reason*, and so made his sentence barbarous. Authors are always afraid to use a preposition in an unconventional way. Writers who dare to take liberties with other constructions are wary of the fixed conventions of prepositional phrases.

**3. Confusion of two idioms.** A collection of several hundred errors with prepositions would be of slight value in school, because the errors would not be prevalent and typical; but a list

of a few that are commonly encountered everywhere will be useful. Most of them originated in a confusion of two idioms. For instance, the most common and barbarous one—"on a whole"—is a blend of two familiar and proper phrases: "on the whole" and "as a whole." For some reason the right forms make only a weak impression; the wrong form ("on a whole") is so prevalent all over the country that teachers wonder whether the new hybrid idiom is establishing itself. A similar confusion between "in my opinion" and "to my mind" has produced a quaint novelty—"in my mind." Of course "in my mind" may be used to mean "within the limits of my mind"; but it can hardly mean "according to my opinion." A different sort of confusion has produced the barbarism "once *and* a while." Apparently "once in a while"—pronounced slurringly as "once'n a while"—sounds as if it had an *and* in it; a great many trustful young people therefore write an *and*. The English idiom is made by using the preposition *in*; it is "once *in* a while."

4. *With deal and treat.* The preposition *on* has a variety of uses to denote subjects of study or discussion: "a lecture *on* industrial conditions, a treatise *on* igneous rocks, a debate *on* the immigration question." Reckless students therefore take it for granted that *on* can be forced into service with the verbs *deal* and *treat*. They should realize that a preposition is as intractable as a piece of flint; it can no more be welded into a new idiom than a stone can be squeezed into new shapes. The foreigner who tampers with prepositions invariably shatters our language in laughable ways. If he wants to use *deal* and *treat*, he must find out what prepositions are used in English. Our idioms are "deal with" and "treat of": "This editorial deals *with* the labor problem." "The next chapter treats *of* quadratics."

5. *Different from.* Our literary idiom requires the preposition *from* after *different* or *differently*: "My answer is different *from* yours; he acts now very differently *from* the way he acted five years ago; the unions have developed very differently *from* what you would have expected." In the last two sentences the

construction of a noun clause as the object of *from* is somewhat difficult and formal; we find it more convenient to say "than he acted," "than you would have expected." The use of *than* after *different* and *differently* can be found in literature and is common in the speech of educated people; yet the student who wishes to avoid criticism will do well to say "different from, differently from."

6. **Dialectic "says for."** There is no such half-and-half verdict against "says for," as in "Shylock *says for* them not to try to stop him; she *says for you* to come home right away." The only legitimate use of "says for" is in a dialect story. We must use such expressions as "tells them not to," "says you must."

7. **With *age* and *old*.** A preposition must have an object, as in "thirty years *of age*," where *years* is adverbial. *Years* is also adverbial in "thirty years old"; it modifies the adjective *old*. These two idioms are wrongly blended in "a man of thirty years old," where *of* has no right.

8. ***Of*.** *Of* forms a number of descriptive idioms: "a man *of* large stature, a matter *of* small importance, this is *of* no account." Though there are dozens of these, and though they seem to be made on a free-and-easy general principle, each is a fixed convention of language; a new one cannot be coined at will. Students who do not realize the adamant quality of prepositional idioms lightly try to forge such novelties as "The party was *of* small pleasure to me"—and so make their themes sound barbarous.

9. ***Consist of*.** There is an idiom "to consist *in*," meaning "to be comprised within the limits of." But the chances are a thousand to one that an American student of the twentieth century means "to be composed of," and that what he ought to use is "to consist *of*," as in "the lunch consisted *of*, our company consisted *of*, a marshmallow sundae consists *of*."

10. ***Off*.** It is better not to combine *of* with *off*, for *off* can do its own prepositional work. Say "got *off* the train, wandered *off* the subject."

11. *With regard to.* One common idiom is formed by a noun between two prepositions—"with regard to." The noun is singular; there is no *s* on it. An entirely different idiom is formed with a verb used impersonally, joined by the conjunction *as* and taking a direct object,—thus: "as regards the second question." This impersonal construction is seldom intended by theme-writers; they mean to use and ought to use "with regard to."

12. *Uses of to.* Good heed should always be paid to the idioms formed by *to*. This preposition is often used by analogy, where analogy has nothing to do with the case. Thus we commonly use *to* after the noun *answer* ("an answer *to* his inquiry, no answer *to* my letter"), but that is no proof that we shall be right if we use *to* after the verb. To say "answered *to* a request" is to make a queer imitation of an antique idiom. It is customary to use *to* with the noun *credit* ("much *to* his credit"), but that is no reason for using *to* with a noun of opposite meaning. There is no such idiom as "*to* his blame," nor can we create it. We are sure to get a foreign-sounding result whenever we employ *to* by guess-work, as in the following: "It is a cause *to* which we should be willing to help." Apparently the writer meant "*to* which we should be willing to give aid"—which is a very different matter. A *to* is needed with the noun *doubt* for joining a noun clause: "doubt *as to* where, doubt *as to* what." A *to* is used after *similar*: "This is similar *to* a previous lesson." A *to* is required after *devoted*: "The whole hour was devoted *to* calisthenics; this paragraph is devoted *to* one word."

13. *Verbs without prepositions.* Certain common verbs are seldom followed by prepositions. Although "remember of" and "remember about" are frequently heard, they are hardly to be found in good books. The fact that *tell* is followed by *of* or *about* proves nothing about *foretell* and *narrate*; these verbs normally take a direct object. We "desist *from* our efforts" and "refrain from actions," but that shows nothing about *resist*; *resist* takes a direct object. *Consider* should be followed directly

by its object; so should *describe*. Among high-school writers there is a widespread dislike to giving *contemplate* its direct object; there is a desire to help the verb out with *on*. But *contemplate* needs no aid; it takes a direct object.

14. **Take no liberties with prepositions.** Perhaps no one student will discover in this section many particular blunders that he has been guilty of. The lesson to be learned is not so much a list of minute wrong idioms as it is a guiding principle: Beware of taking liberties with those fixed and arbitrary idioms that are formed with prepositions, for any such carelessness results in a specially humiliating botch.

### E. VERBS

1. **Introducing quotations.** A quotation is ordinarily the object of some verb like *say, ask, exclaim, remark, answer*. This verb is often placed after the quotation:

"Why has he?" *queried* Mr. Lamont.

By a remarkable extension of syntax the verbs coming after quotations are often nothing more than a description of the way in which the character spoke:

"No, you won't," *smiled* Miss Arne.

This descriptive use of verbs has recently flourished in periodical stories, branching out into expressions that would have made our grandfathers wrinkle their foreheads in astonishment:

"Oh, I suppose so," she *shrugged*.

If that is the latest fashion in idioms, we need not quarrel with it, though we cannot recommend it. The subject is brought up here to show that these oddly used verbs are placed *after* a quotation. To put them before a quotation is to be freakish and to make sentence-errors. The verb *speak*, for instance, does not take a quotation as an object clause, but forms an independent sentence.

Then at length Jasper spoke up. "You shall not!"



It is good and regular usage to write

"It sounds correct to me," he *whimpered*.

But if we want *whimpered* or *broke in* or *protested* or anything of that sort before a quotation, we must almost certainly make a separate sentence—thus:

Sid Randolph now *objected*. "It's all wrong."

Then her voice *rang* out. "They're gone!"

**2. The weak passive.** Whenever there is no particular reason for the passive verb, the active is preferable. The passive in narrative is likely to give an impression of vagueness and lack of interest.

The lights were at once turned on, and the source of the tappings was searched for everywhere.

What does the writer gain by the passive voice? It will generally prove true that the action seems more brisk, that the reader's attention is better held, if a writer says that *we did this*, rather than if he says that *this was done by us*: "We at once turned on the lights and searched everywhere."

The habit of using an unentertaining, impersonal passive leads to a meaningless shift from active to passive within a sentence.

Hovey broke one record, and another was almost equaled by him.

A writer who has trained himself to avoid needless compound sentences would say: "Hovey broke one record and almost equaled another." The writer who has had no such training is prone to say "we saw" in one clause and "were seen by us" in the second, or "we had" in the first clause and "were enjoyed by us" in the second.

An objectionable passive is the pseudo-legal form with *able*.

No more money *was able to be collected* in our school.

This stilted legal use of *able* fascinates some students who are otherwise unaffected in their style. *Able* causes such expres-

sions as "the nail was not able to be driven through the knot; the penny was not able to be found."

The passive with a "retained object" should be regarded suspiciously. It is correct enough to say that we "were taught a lesson" or "were shown some new tricks" or "were told what to do" if a passive seems desirable, but the incautious writer who toys with retained objects is likely to perpetrate such oddities as

I was described the kind of shoes I ought to buy.

#### F. NOUNS

**Inanimate possessive.** The possessive of nouns that name inanimate objects is common and correct in a great many cases: "the sun's rays, the city's wealth, the steamer's wireless, a dollar's worth." There has always been an objection to extending this possessive beyond the limits of customary expressions. Teachers usually object to "the wastebasket's handles, the shoes' soles, the passage's meaning." In any case of doubt use "handles of, soles of, meaning of."

#### G. THAN

We have learned that *than* ought not to be used after *different*. It is a much worse blunder to use *than* after *prefer* or *hardly*, as the following writers did:

I should have preferred to have a simpler dinner *than to have* so many courses.

Ned had hardly stood up, *than* he was knocked down.

When we use such words as *prefer*, *different*, and *hardly*, we are thinking of a comparison: we *prefer* a meal because it is *simpler than*; we see a *difference* because one thing is *less expensive than*; Ned had *no sooner* stood up *than* he was knocked down. But unless a comparison is expressed in so many words, *than* is a misfit. The word to use after *prefer* is *to*; after *hardly* we must use *when*. The correct sentences containing *prefer* and *hardly* are given on the next page.

I should have *preferred* a simpler dinner *to* one with so many courses.

*Hardly* had we taken our seats, *when* the orchestra lights were dimmed.

### H. AS AND LIKE

1. *Like* tries to be a conjunction. *Like* has always wanted to be a conjunction. For five centuries it struggled almost in vain, being able to do no more than get into print occasionally in ambiguous cases.

*Like* some in plagues *kill* with preservatives.

—Donne, about 1620.

*Like* was always compelled to be an adjective that commonly carried after it a noun or pronoun to show the similarity: "Jessica, *like* a little *shrew*." Thus the word became a common preposition; in literary use it is almost always followed by an object. Yet *like* has never given up the struggle to be a conjunction; it has crowded into literature now and then; it has with marvelous persistence labored unceasingly to establish itself in the spoken language. Before 1850 it had made a conquest of all but the northeast corner of the United States. Since 1850 its progress has been continuous even there. Whereas Lowell could then say that "*like* as a conjunction is never heard in New England," it is now constantly heard there in such expressions as "like they have in restaurants." It appears in recent English novels and is frequently to be heard in the conversation of the graduates of English universities.

Hence *like* is a difficult problem for teachers. Some southern schools will not tolerate it as a conjunction; some northern schools are weary of the fight against it. The common practice is to say to classes: "*Like* as a conjunction may be establishing itself, but we don't know surely. Its career may be like that of *you was*, which flourished magnificently in the eighteenth century, and in the nineteenth died out of educated speech. *Like* as a conjunction is not allowed in themes at this school. Don't

use *like* for joining a verb." The substitutes are *such as* or *as if* or *the way*.

He wore a gorgeous bandana, *such as* you see in movies.

They acted *as if* they had been scared.

He stormed at us *the way* a section-boss might curse out his gang.

What has been said applies to *like* that indicates a direct comparison, a likeness. The case is different for *like* meaning "as if something were probably going to happen."

It looked *like it was going to rain*.

This use has made less progress and is more generally called a vulgarism.

2. *Like* is a good preposition. A person who is accustomed to joining a verb with *like* may go too far in curbing the habit. The preposition *like* is as correct and useful as any idiom we have: "a bandana *like those* that you see in the movies, acted *like a scared animal*, stormed *like a profane section-boss*." To say "acted *as a scared animal*" or "sounded *as thunder*" is to make a worse mistake than to use *like* as a conjunction. *Like* followed by a noun or pronoun is a correct and natural phrase; the error is made by adding a verb. The handy and effective formula for overcoming the wrong habit is to think, "Don't join a verb with *like*."

3. *As with so and that*. There is a correct idiom formed by *so as* and an infinitive that really shows the purpose of an action: "He spoke quietly, *so as not to frighten* the boy." But the mere infinitive can usually show purpose, and often expresses the meaning better. *So as* is likely to be clumsy or barbarous. For a clause of purpose the connective is *so that*: "He spoke quietly, *so that* the boy would not be frightened."

4. *That with know*. After the verb *know* the natural conjunction is *that*: "I don't know *that* I have ever seen his handwriting." There is a strong tendency in the common speech of all of us to slip in *as* after "don't know"; in formal writing and speaking we should use *that*.

## EXERCISES

Briefly explain in what ways words are misused in the following sentences, and be prepared to recast them. In some of the sentences there are no errors.

If, for example, you were to comment on "5. It looks now like things were going to be very different than they used to be," you could say: "5. *Like* is used as a conjunction. *Than* is used after *different*."

[Further practice is given in the miscellaneous sentences following the exercises for Chapter XX.]

1. "Bureaucrats," he said, "would not have worked here under the conditions we encountered."
2. They cannot grasp the lesson that is trying to be taught.
3. We could hardly resist from stealing the pies that smelled so tempting.
4. So as to develop these attributes to the greatest extent, the officer needs a thorough training.
5. Colorado is waking up and growing larger, and some day it will be one of the largest states in America.
6. A half a dozen Mexicans were sleepily eying us as we dismounted.
7. "Come right in and make yourselves at home," greeted Mrs. Leonard hospitably.
8. I was no sooner seated in the trolley-car when I found that I had forgotten the postal-card which I had promised to mail.
9. Now, with regards to the second item of your bill, did you really work twenty-five hours?
10. Newton said that when he contemplated on the vastness of the universe, he felt as a little child picking up pebbles on the beach.
11. The Chinese merchant thought it wise to follow the students' example.
12. His latest book deals on the crude dramas that were developed by savage peoples.
13. The bcrers had destroyed most of the wharf's piles.
14. This chops them into logs of about twenty or thirty feet long.
15. It is a true fact that he has kind of a superstition about walking under a ladder.
16. His little after-dinner speech was far different than we had expected.

17. The shopkeeper couldn't understand us; but when I said for him to keep the change, he comprehended perfectly.

18. I tried a corkscrew, and then a knife, and finally a pair of heavy pliers—but of no avail.

19. Don't you ever stop and think of how many hours a man would have to work to earn that amount?

20. Sonnino was then in grave doubt of whether to remain at Paris or to return home.

21. A swamp larger than the state of Connecticut has been reclaimed by draining a portion of the Everglades.

22. The majority of fellows in my school are of sixteen years or more.

23. Almost the first ride that I can remember about was taken in a wagon on the prairie.

24. Some plays played by amateurs have an unclean moral taste.

25. After this distracting interruption Connors went on, "Don't you see how unfairly we have been treated?"

26. She pretended to be absorbed in the pictures, but once and a while she would peek at the other tourists.

27. Too many reporters are like he who spoke of "disesteem as a resultant of bibulousness."

28. But I guess you feel like I do—always worrying about the exams.

29. Women always try to get off of a car backwards.

30. Since it was only about a year ago since it was built, its walls were still of white plaster.

31. Involuntarily his hand tore one of the petals from a gorgeous heliotrope; but alas! at the destructive touch its grandeur vanished, he knew not where. How unsightly it appeared with its raiment disarranged from its sublime order.

32. Every volume must be taken down and dusted, so therefore I think we had best begin tonight.

33. The first and most important thing in my mind is the means of ventilation.

34. By means of wireless waves he succeeded in setting fire to bits of cotton.

35. A book stands upon the shelf long after the magazine has gone back to paper stock.

36. This first advantage is one to which everyone should be willing to help.

37. An important measure has been passed by Congress as regards to the admission of immigrants.

38. If such a league were once established, the commerce of the nations would never suffer like it has in the present war.

39. An article that treats on "The Return of Mantua's Tapestries" doesn't sound very exhilarating to me.

40. The questions are more difficult and more different from each other than you suppose.

41. Shopping in a large city we soon found to be of little pleasure.

42. In all his previous life he had never for a moment considered about the value of a five-dollar bill.

43. I tried to divert my mind by reading a book, but to no end, for the noise of the tempest kept me alarmed.

44. I have therefore been forced to live a lonely, secluded, retired life in a remote and sequestered place far removed from other people.

45. If every school had a gymnasium like I have described, I am sure they would be more than satisfied.

46. Now that I stop to think of it, I don't know as I have any claim at all on your bounty.

47. Our cargo consisted mainly in rice and coffee.

48. He got into trouble, but his uncle got him out.

49. To be sure the work is hard; but we ought, however, to buckle to it with a will.

50. My father is a careful driver, so we avoided a misfortune like we saw near Tuxedo Park, where a man had run off into a gutter and could not get his automobile out of it.

51. They had no sooner landed, when the monster rushed down upon them.

52. The use of chewing-gum may be termed as a mild vice.

53. I thought he was only mimicking with his voice the sound of the blow, and possibly it was that sound which suggested his thought.

54. After a half an hour's waiting we were able to get seats on top of a bus.

55. Her mind, just as her house, is now decrepit.

56. As the time draws near study time, two or three leave together, leaving only a few who still continue to fill themselves.

57. I was taken to my work-foreman and was explained my new duties by him.

58. The paragraph starts in and says that King Arthur was mythical; then it treats with Arthur as real.

59. In "The Skeleton in Armor" the supernatural is just touched on in the beginning and at the end to add a touch of interest.

60. In crossing a certain wilderness my father had to take a number of the peons to take care of the mules and as guides.

61. Every time I can find a reasonable excuse for making a call, I make it a point to visit him.
62. I much prefer a basketball shoe with its thick sole than sneakers that make me feel almost barefoot.
63. There certainly is something about the play that gets a hold of you.
64. Lyric poetry is poetry that has sort of a swing to it.
65. Hardly had I laid my head on the pillow than the porter called to me once more.
66. It appears on a whole, after thorough investigation, that only slight damage was done.
67. Although lumber is not used as much as it used to be, there are still a few scattered camps in the thickest lumber districts.
68. Running up the stairs with all my might, I saw in front of me a girl hurrying just as I.
69. My chum is the kind of a friend a person wants.
70. At seven-thirty we decided to take a little drive out to the Country Club and dance for a little while.



## CHAPTER XIX

### FORMS AND MEANINGS OF WORDS

This chapter is in four sections. The first, "Forms," is not a treatment of "Plurals," "Possessives," etc.; for those subjects are too elementary and too large for this kind of textbook. Section A is merely a selected list of a few points that are sometimes not taught in the lower grades and that are common causes of error in the senior high-school.

#### A. FORMS

1. **Plurals.** (a) The following end in *s* after a single *l*: *handfuls*, *cupfuls*, *basketfuls*; even such forms as *cityfuls* have been properly coined. (b) *Species* is a singular form; the *s* is part of the word. The plural has the same form—"seven *species* of butterflies." The very different noun *specie* means "metal money." (c) *Alumnus* means "a graduate"; *alumni* is the plural. The forms that refer to girls and women who graduate are *alumna* and *alumnae*. (d) A few plurals ending in *a* are in common use: "These *data* have not been recorded; these *strata* are on edge; these *phenomena* have never been explained; their *insignia* are a star and crescent." The singulars are *datum*, *stratum*, and *phenomenon*. The singular of *insignia* is not in use, but the modern school and college vernacular applies *insignia* as a singular to the lettering on caps and sweaters; the dictionaries have not noted this meaning.

2. **Compound words.** In the spelling section of the Appendix emphasis is laid upon the need of a hyphen in all such compound adjectives as *ten-foot*, *gray-haired*, *open-eyed*, *two-year-old*. Usage in compounding nouns is a very different matter: the need of hyphens is not so great, and custom is quite un-

settled. Two pieces of advice will be useful: (a) The solid form is generally preferable—*basketball, today, anyone, textbook, upstairs*; (b) if there is no warrant for the solid form, help the reader with hyphens—as in *boat-load, self-denial, foster-child, fly-leaf*; especially use the hyphen in words compounded with gerunds (like *stumbling-block, dining-room*) in order to keep them from looking as if “the block stumbled” or “the room dined.” Sometimes the lack of a hyphen makes a sentence unintelligible, as in “Ours was a heavy air boat”; the writer meant “a boat for sailing in a heavy breeze—a *heavy-air* boat.”

**3. Possessives.** In a few brief and customary phrases the apostrophe and *s* are not attached to the possessive noun, but are put at the end of the phrase: “Anybody else’s duty,” “the King of Italy’s suite.” Do not extend this peculiar idiom by trying to say “the man on third’s chance” or “the Governor of the State of New Jersey’s wife.” Avoid clumsiness by using *of*: “chance of the man on third,” “wife of the Governor of New Jersey.”

**4. Confusion with *ness*.** The suffix *ness* is added to adjectives like *joyful, lonely, drunken*; it cannot be added to nouns like *drunkard* or *coward*. There is a noun *cowardice* made from the noun *coward*, and a noun *drunkenness* made from the adjective *drunken*.

**5. Adjectives in *ical*.** There is an *ic* in the adjectives derived from *monarch* and *farce*: *monarchical, farcical*.

**6. Adjectives and adverbs.** The following are used only as adjectives: *bad, good, fine, real*. The corresponding adverbs are *badly, well, finely, really*. The use of *real* to modify adjectives (“real hard”) is usually not tolerated. Students who know about these adjectives, who seldom misuse them in writing, often err in oral composition. Beware of *good* and *fine*. Use *well* and *finely* to modify verbs: “he played *well*”; “it’s getting on *finely*.”

Certain common words are both adjective and adverb: *right, wrong, better, worse, fast, faster, first, hard, ill*. *Right* and *wrong* may take a *ly*, and *firstly* has been used by some authors; but a *ly* should never be added to the others. Such forms as

"worsely" and "fastly" are ignorant coinages. *Seldom* and *doubtless* are adverbs without any *ly* form. The intensive *precious* ("precious few of them") has no *ly* form.

It is strange, but it is sadly true, that many intelligent students are not clear in their minds about the irregular form *worse*. This is the comparative degree of both the adjective and the adverb. The superlative degree is *worst*.

Only a few of these common comparatives are both adjective and adverb. Such words as *easier* and *clearer* and *smoother* are adjectives; the corresponding adverbs are *more easily*, *more clearly*, *more smoothly*.

We use *toward* and *towards* indifferently, also *beside* and *besides*. The tendency to use this adverbial *s* (as in *sometimes*) is strong in English speech, but is improper in the case of the common adverbs, *anyway*, *anywhere*, *somewhere*. Nor should the *s* be used with the adverbial noun *way*; "walked quite a *way* down the street" is the correct form.

7. **Past tenses.** For two centuries there has been a tendency in English speech to change the past tenses of verbs from a regular to an irregular ending. In 1755 Dr. Johnson used *caught*, but within a century that form had become antiquated and vulgar. In 1855 when Longfellow wrote "*dove* into the water," his Cambridge friends were horrified at that "wrong, new form," and the poet substituted the "correct" *dived*. As late as 1910 *dove* was considered improper in many schools, but *dived* seems to have died out of the speech of the younger generation. Perfect participles have run the same course. There is a general tendency to choose *lit* and *dreamt*, rather than *lighted* and *dreamed*. In 1885 the editors of the *Century Dictionary* said twice in three lines that *proven* was "an improper form"; yet to young people of today *proved* sounds strange; they all prefer *proven*. People who can still say *swelled* for the past tense are uncomfortable with that form for a participle; they prefer *have swollen*. Most students who are deaf to the participle *lain* will adopt the doubtful *has gotten* with eagerness. They appear to

like all the participles in *n* except *lain*. The most remarkable case of this preference for *n* is the verb *wake*. Students are rarely willing to use the plain *waked*; they grope for some *n* participle and create *woken* and *awoken*. The novelist Galsworthy has used the same participles, thus proving the strength of the tendency in the twentieth century. Amidst this changing usage a textbook cannot lay down the law, but it can recommend that at present the following *ed* forms should be used for both past tense and perfect participle: *flowed*, *proved*, *waked*. Students should not be afraid of *dived*, *dreamed*, *lighted*, and *swelled*. The principal parts of *flee* are *flee*, *fled*, *fled*.

But there is no general rhetorical rule that *ed* forms are better. A number of common blunders are made by the use of *ed*. The following forms are correct; the *ed* termination would be utterly wrong:

| Past tense | Perfect participle |
|------------|--------------------|
| besought   | besought           |
| biew       | blown              |
| crept      | crept              |
| dealt      | dealt              |
| did        | done               |
| flew       | flown              |
| saw        | seen               |
| slew       | slain              |
| slept      | slept              |
| strove     | striven            |
| wept       | wept               |

Certain verbs require special notice. (a) Four verbs often appear with a wrong *t* or *d* in the past tense. *Attack* is perfectly regular: *attacked*, *attacked*. *Burst* is complete in itself; there is no form in *d*. *Cast* is also complete in itself; hence no *d* should be added to form the participles of *downcast* or *forecast*. *Drown* is perfectly regular; *drowned*, *drowned*. (b) "Boughten" is a participle suitable only for child's talk. The participle of *choose* is *chosen*, with one *o*. (c) Some old-fashioned people take pride in the past tense *eat*, but the rest of us are required to use *ate* and the participle *eaten*. (d) The verb *lie* is commonly

confused with the verb *lay*, *laid*. Educated people are required to use

*lie, lying, lay, lain.*

People who like *dove* better than *dived* ought to prefer a past tense *lay*. Those who are in love with *proven* and *woken* ought to be pleased with the perfect participle *lain*.

8. **The subjunctive.** The subjunctive *were* should be used in a condition contrary to fact: "If I *were* two years older; if there *were* no reward for industry."

9. **The past perfect** There are two ways in which past perfect tenses are wrongly formed. (a) On the model of such a phrase as *might have known* the impossible phrase "had *have* known" (or even "had *of* known"! ) is constructed. There can be no such combination as "had have" with a perfect participle. The past perfect is made with *had* alone: "If I *had known*." (b) A *had* should never appear before *ought*; the past perfect is *ought to have known*. (See *ought* in Section B.)

10. **Splitting infinitives and verbs.** An infinitive should not be split apart if the modifier can just as conveniently be placed before or after the infinitive. "*To* secretly *confer*" or "*to have* in the meantime *bought*" sounds awkward; it would be better to write "*to confer* secretly," "*to have bought* in the meantime." The same effect of awkwardness is likely to be caused by splitting a long verb phrase after *have*. "I *might have* just as well *stayed*" and "we *should have* undoubtedly *been* better off" seem disarranged; we feel that the following are more shipshape: "I *might* just as well *have stayed*"; "we *should* undoubtedly *have been* better off."

11. **False participles.** Several compound adjectives are properly formed from the participle *handed*: "the crew was *short-handed*; a *left-handed* batter; a *high-handed* proceeding." Three common adjectives compounded with *hand* are sometimes confused with these: "*second-hand* furniture; an *off-hand* remark; by *underhand* methods." No *ed* should appear in these three adjectives.

## B. MEANINGS

1. **Prejudices.** There is no part of human life in which we have such violent prejudices as we have about the meanings of words. Words usually seem to us like stable and unchangeable things which must mean now what they have always meant, and which ought to mean everywhere what they mean where we live. An older person is prone to despise new meanings; a younger person is prone to despise the prejudice against new meanings; a Londoner cannot abide "I *guess* I won't go," and an American may balk at "*one* wants *one's* traps about *one*." We are so habituated to our partial knowledge of words that we can hardly shake ourselves free from our ignorance. Most of us have small desire for new knowledge; we feel that our own instincts must be right. One student who shuddered at *had lighted* felt nothing wrong in "a collar that *circumvented* his neck." Some people who do not consult a dictionary twice a year have most pronounced opinions about "good English." Other people who use a small dictionary twice a day have the most opinionated hatred of any knowledge that lies outside those two covers. If once we pick up a bit of theory about a meaning, we are likely to abide by that meaning all the days of our life—blind and deaf to facts. If we have a logical mind, we may reason about meanings, arguing that in the nature of things a word must signify thus and cannot signify so. Yet logic has little to do with the facts of language. If we find in some book a statement that a certain meaning is wrong, we judge quite naturally that the meaning is wrong. Yet there is considerable chance that the statement was ignorantly made and that we have acquired false information. Two little examples will illustrate. (1) Dr. Johnson thought that *had rather* was a vulgar error, and so for four generations after he published his Dictionary *had rather* was frowned upon. But it really was a worthy and venerable idiom a century before he was born. (2) Because somebody thought that *Welsh rabbit* was a vulgarism, restaurants carefully print *Welsh rarebit* on their menus; yet *rarebit* is a pure invention, an ignorant phantasm.

**2. The facts of usage.** We cannot know the facts of language by guessing or by reasoning or by instinctively feeling or by consulting a little dictionary. We cannot always know by searching in four large dictionaries. For words are variable quantities, subject to changing fashions, and can be learned only as other fashions are learned—by familiar acquaintance with the facts of usage. Just as it is impossible to argue about the styles of clothing, so it is useless to reason about fashions in words. We must observe the facts of custom; we must conform unless we are willing to be peculiar; we shall be laughed at if we try to fight custom or if we are ignorant of custom. This chapter tries to impress the idea that we shall be thought “queer” if we violate the usage of our day, if we show in our speech and writing that we are not familiar with the ways of words.

**3. Words that are now shifting.** This chapter deals with a border region, a space of debatable ground. On one side are all the thousands of old and accepted meanings that usually appear correctly in themes. On the other side are the latest slang expressions, for which most students have a keen ear and which they seldom mistake for dignified terms in compositions. What concerns us here is the few dozen cases of words that may be shifting their meaning, that are already in common use among uneducated people, but that have not yet established themselves in the written language. We are not saying that these new meanings are necessarily “wrong,” but are issuing warnings that they are not yet “right,” and are not accepted in school composition.

**4. Rapid changes.** Few people realize how impossible it is to set any boundaries between right and wrong in the uses of words. No word is wrong simply because it is new—for example, *camouflage* was never heard of before 1915; within two years it was accepted everywhere and was useful in the most dignified sermons and editorials. No word is right because it is old; *nice* has had a long literary history, but has so deteriorated in recent use that we have to shun it. An expression that is crude and slangy today may be in a betwixt-and-between status ten years

hence, and dignified twenty years hence. An illustration is "cut it out." This was a novelty about 1896; it was then so obviously a raw bit of vaudeville lingo that no schoolboy thought it was proper in a serious sentence. Yet in 1919 "cut it out" was used seriously, without quotation marks, in a dignified book on education. "Butt in" appeared about 1896 and apparently had just as good a chance as "cut it out," but has remained at the level where it started. In 1900 *near-by* was a new adjective that was called vulgar in the textbooks; by 1914 it had worked its way into a textbook on English literature. The most phenomenal growth of an idiom ever recorded was "due to" as a compound preposition. During untold centuries the little word *due* had stayed quietly within the bounds of an adjective used as a predicate or an appositive: "His cold was *due* to overheating; this was an old enmity, *due* to rivalry." About 1912 teachers first noticed the perplexing construction of *due to* at the beginning of a sentence: "*Due to* rheumatism, he had to quit swimming." Though the construction must have been sprouting for years, no notice had been taken of it; it was seen only occasionally; few textbooks commented upon it. By 1916 it was shooting up like Jack's bean-stalk; students were all using it greedily, and were at a loss to see why teachers objected. By 1917 it had been printed in many careful articles and even in the text of a manual on good diction.

5. Not a question of right and wrong. The examples in the previous paragraph may be the most useful part of this chapter, for they show vividly the principle that underlies all questions of choice of words. There is no right or wrong in these matters of diction. The only question worth asking about disputed diction is "Has the word been used seriously by educated people?" We say "seriously." Professors of English may pick up the latest slang as eagerly as boys, and may enjoy it in their private talk—that is, flippantly. At the same time they would feel sorry for a boy who thought that "butt in" or "horn in" was a good verb to describe what the poet did in *Julius Cæsar* when Brutus



and Cassius were quarreling. The slang expression is not wrong in itself, for a novelist may need it; it is pitifully wrong if used seriously. We cannot prepare a list of words that are forever to be considered disreputable. We can only post a list of expressions *that are not yet taken seriously by people whose judgment we respect.*

Any such list as the following is temporary, subject to revision every few years. But we ought not to over-emphasize "temporary." Quick changes of status are unusual. The great majority of meanings remain firmly fixed for decades; a rapid elevation in dignity is the exception.

6. Comments on words often misused. Most of the comment is devoted to explaining the correct meanings of the words; in order to avoid confusion the wrong meanings are sometimes not mentioned. (If the student does not know the errors, he ought not to be taught.) But in many cases it is necessary to speak of the erroneous uses; in studying such comments the student should be on his guard to learn the *right* meaning.

The unnumbered comments are on clear cases of bad usage. The number 2 means: "Less important in school than the unnumbered comments" (either because the errors are less common or because they are more debatable). The number three means: "This comment is of slight importance in school."

**Accept** means literally "to take to oneself." We *accept* a gift, *accept* our fate, *accept* an invitation. In general, we *accept* something that is offered to us.

**Affect** is always a verb, meaning "to influence, to act upon." The news *affects* a person; poetry does not *affect* some people pleasantly; the law doesn't *affect* us. A person who makes silly little pretensions is called *affected*.

3. **Aggravate** means literally "to increase the weight of," usually in an unpleasant sense. We may *aggravate* guilt or difficulty or labors. The meaning of "irritate" is generally objected to in textbooks.

**All** is properly used as an adverb in such expressions as "*all* the more," "*all* along." But "all the further" is a pure vulgarism; we must say "as far as" or, if that is not strong enough, express the meaning by other words.

**Allude** means "to refer to." *Allusion* means "a reference to." He *alluded* to the Great Armada. He made an *allusion* to the "Ode to the West Wind."

**Almost.** See *most*.

**Among** cannot be used of two things or persons; much less can it be used with a singular noun. We use *among* to refer to more than two, usually to a large number: "*among* the blades of grass, *among* the students, *among* other matters."

3. **Any.** A common but entirely illogical idiom is a superlative with *of any*: "the best *of any* I have seen, the largest *of any* of the species of fir." It is safer to avoid this curious construction.

3. **Apt** means strictly "adapted for or disposed to," and is applied to things or animals or persons: "a horse that is *apt* to balk, a workman who is *apt* to be late." Fastidious people object to the impersonal use, as in "it is *apt* to rain." Use *likely*.

3. **As did.** See *than*.

**Awful** used to be an impressive word meaning "awe-inspiring," but has degenerated into a mere vague, childish intensive. The degenerate meaning is so widely prevalent that it is now almost impossible to use the word in its former dignified-sense. To use *awful* as an adverb for modifying an adjective is an error raised to the second power.

2. **Become** is sometimes substituted for *come* in the writing of students who are straining for effect. In their normal speech they would say correctly "has come to be known," but with an idea of elevating their style a bit they put a quite erroneous *become* into the written sentence. *Become* does not take an infinitive for a predicate.

**Begin.** Few high-school writers use *begin* and *beginning* sufficiently. *Start* and *commence* are overworked. It is a poor choice of words to speak of "the *start* of a play." Of course a game may "start" or it may "commence," but why not have it "begin" more often?

3. **Between** should normally be used of two objects. "Between them" ought to apply to only two persons. Authors have used *between* for three or more, and have used the convenient but illogical idiom "between each one of a series"; yet the amateur should know that there is a prejudice against both constructions.

**Both** refers to two objects together. It is often wrongly used for *each*. It is hard to imagine how "both persons could be afraid of each other"; the writer meant that "each was afraid of the other." It is well to hesitate a moment before writing *both*, in order to make sure whether *each* is not the right word.

**Bring** means "convey to this place where we now are." How some English-speaking persons contrive to twist their minds into saying

"bring it up *there*" is a mystery. We always "bring things *here*," to this place where we are.

**But** is not contented with creating false compound sentences, but worms its way into phrases where no word at all is needed. Why should we feel easier with "don't doubt *but* that he will"? The sentence seems clogged; we could better say "don't doubt that he will." There ought not to be a *but* after "can't help"; the proper idiom is a gerund which is the object of *help*: "we can't help *admiring*; you cannot help *pitying* the fellow."

**Can.** See *may*.

**Commence.** See *begin*.

**2. Comparatively** causes confused syntax. We are familiar with "compared to" and "compared with," which are followed by an object: "We have very little rain *compared with* what they have in the tropics." But *comparatively* is an adverb, complete in itself; it cannot be followed by any object to show the comparison: "We have a *comparatively* small rainfall; there have been *comparatively* few absences this winter." If we want to indicate "compared with what," we must use that idiom: "There have been few absences *compared with* the number we had last winter."

**2. Comprise** means "include." We may say that "his vocabulary *comprises* a good many slang terms," or that "a good many slang terms *are comprised in* his vocabulary." Students nearly always employ the passive, which they often seem to confuse with "composed." If we mean "are included within," we may need *comprised*; but not otherwise. Students seldom need to use *comprise*.

**Constitute** is a formal word with a formal meaning—"to make up the component parts of." A student may sometimes need *constituted*, but will ordinarily get on better with *formed* or *made up of*.

**Destination.** If we wish to name "the place for which we set out," we must use *destination*: "We arrived at our *destination* five hours late." (*Destiny* means "the fate in store for us.")

**Do** is often used in a proper way to refer to some action named in the previous sentence: "You may need more bread. If you *do*, let me know." But beyond this customary limit the reference of *do* may be too vague, or it may be downright clumsy: "Perhaps you will have to be examined at the border. If you *do*, remain quiet and polite." The writer might better have said "if so" or "in that case," or "if you are," or he might have used a new verb: "If the customs officers *seem* rude, remain quiet." It is a general truth that *do* is overworked and made to serve as a meaningless substitute where a different verb would be in order.

**Each.** See *both*.

**Effect** is nearly always a noun in school use: "had a good *effect*, without any *effect* at all."

2. **Elicit** means "to draw forth, to bring out" when applied to certain abstract nouns like *truth* or *applause*: "He could *elicit* no answer from the witness. His sportsmanlike act *elicited* a cheer from the grandstand."

2. **End up** ("to end up at Aunt Martha's house") is an oddity that ought not to be written seriously.

3. **Enthused** is objectionable. Use *was enthusiastic*.

2. **Epitaph** means "an inscription on a tombstone."

2. **Epithet** is "a descriptive term, usually unpleasant." Roosevelt used the epithets "mollycoddle" and "undesirable citizens."

**Except** may be used as a verb, meaning "to take out or leave out," but it is an excessively rare verb in themes.

2. **Exhort** means "to urge on to action": "The instructor *exhorted* the freshmen to distinguish between a comma and a period."

**Expect** should be used of something to happen in the future: "I *expect* a letter soon; we *expect* him on the next train." In referring to a past event use *suppose*: "I *suppose* he came last night; I *suppose* you had a good time."

2. **Extort** means "to twist or wring out." We may *extort* a confession or a bribe or tears.

2. **Factor** is grievously overworked. If we really mean "a force which helps to produce," we have a right to say *factor*: but the chances are that we had better use *feature* or *cause* or *item* or *element* or *influence* or *power* or *force*.

**Fewer.** See *less*.

2. **Financial** is normally applied to the great monetary operations of governments or large corporations. It is a huge term to apply to the affairs of ordinary private citizens. It is likely to create such absurdities as "financially poor."

2. **Finish.** We may "*finish* the reading of a book" or "the reading of a book may be *finished*," but our language has not yet evolved any way of making *we* the subject of the passive. It is a strange contortion to say "when I *am finished* reading." Say "when I *have finished*."

**Fix** is probably the most tiresome word in our language. There is dictionary authority for *fix* in the sense of "arrange," but that authority does not remove the weariness from the mind of a reader who has to see perpetually "*fixed* the chair so, *fixed* her hair, *fixed* me up, *fixed* a way, *fixed* things, *fixed* up the room, *fixed* up a supper." We have the words *arrange*, *manage*, *contrive*, *adjust*, *outfit*, *dispose*, *tidy*, *pre-*

*pare*, and dozens of others that let us into the secret of what "fix" means. *Fix* is properly a firm and sturdy word, meaning "to make fast," as in "*fix* your eyes, *fix* your thoughts, *fix* the prices."

2. **Former** and **latter** are sometimes convenient pronouns for clear reference to two antecedents, but they have a somewhat legal sound, a stiff unnaturalness, and ought not to be used unless there is real need.

2. **Funny** is commonly used in conversation for *peculiar*, *strange*, *astonishing*, *puzzling*, and the like. But the normal meaning is "comical." Careless use of the word may make a serious paragraph sound funny.

**Get** is the most-used and the most useless verb. It has always been popular in a great variety of literary idioms, and yet has no particular meaning of its own. It is a bane to audiences and readers because it is so often a lazy word—weak and vapid and wearisome. Desperate teachers have sometimes passed an exclusion act against *get*, refusing to admit it to any theme for any reason. Beware of the unnecessary *get*. A frequent repetition of *get* and *fix* and *take* is a sure mark of an undesirable composition.

**Get to.** "To *get to go*," "couldn't *get to see*" are mere dialect.

**Hardly** means "scarcely" or "only with great difficulty." Hence to use *not* before *hardly* is to destroy the meaning. We must say "could hardly hear, can hardly believe."

**Help.** See *but*.

2. **Illusion** means "false appearance," as in "an optical *illusion*, to be under an *illusion*."

2. **Imbued** means literally "soaked" and is applied figuratively to the mind, as in "*imbued* with right principles, *imbued* with a notion."

2. **Imply** means "to cause to think without saying directly," as in "he *implied* that someone had cheated." It is an entirely different word from *apply*.

**In** should show motion or position within a place: "He slept *in* a loft; the lion paces up and down *in* his cage." If we mean "motion toward" we should use *into*: "We climbed *into* the bus; he slipped *into* the corner; she fell *into* the water"; "they got *into* trouble." The expressions "want in" and "want out" have never become respectable idioms in our speech.

2. **Instil** means "to pour in gradually and artfully." False notions of honor may be *instilled* into a boy; also fine ideals of modesty and politeness may be *instilled*. Use *instil* for the ideas or feelings that are injected.

2. It was discussed in Chapter XVII. One common impersonal use deserves separate comment here: "*It says in the book that.*" This is a

stock phrase in school language, but had better not be written. Use "the book says, the lesson says, the paper says."

**Latter.** See *former*.

**Leave and Let.** In modern English *leave* is not followed by an infinitive. Use *let* with an infinitive, as in "*let me go, let me see.*" Use *let* for the meaning of "allow." (The meanings of *let* and *leave* are variously interwoven, so that a full discussion might cause perplexity.) The useful fact to record for school use is that *let* means "allow" and is the word to use with infinitives.

**Less** should be used with a singular noun or with an adjective to show quantity or degree: "*less money, less exercise, less importance, less common.*" With plural nouns use *fewer*: "*fewer excuses, fewer five-dollar bills, fewer storms.*"

**Liable** may be used with an infinitive that shows an unpleasant possibility, but this fact is so dangerous for theme-writers to know that it is sometimes concealed from them. They are urged always to use *likely* with an infinitive. *Likely* will always express the meaning just as well, and usually very much better. Say that it is *likely* to rain, *likely* to come, *likely* to be sent.

**Lie** is a kind of invalid in our vocabulary. Despondent people fear that it is *lying* at death's door. But *lie* is a hale and hearty necessity in the high-school vocabulary. The past tense is *lay*: "He *lay* at death's door." The perfect participle is *lain*: "The verb has *lain* at death's door since the Civil War." The principal parts have already been shown in this chapter, but may well be displayed once more.

lie      lying      lay      lain

Any student who can write "had lain" (without first writing "had laid" and scratching out *laid*) shows that he has a conscience, a good education, and a strong will.

2. **Majority** applies to the units of some group: "a *majority* of the Senate, a *majority* of the people." If we are speaking of a pie or a day or a deck, we must use some such words as "greater part of" or "most of."

2. **Make good**, though a newcomer among our idioms, has grown steadily in respectability. But it has a queer sound when applied to venerable or literary subjects.

**May** is the correct word to use in asking permission: "*May* I come in? *May* I write on a different topic? *May* I be excused early?"

2. **Means** belongs in the class of words like *comprise* and *imbue* and *with respect to*—words whose meanings are so vaguely known, so customary in a formal style, that they produce stilted and abnormal

constructions. Why should a young person wish to speak of "the *means* whereby I might earn a dollar" or "the *means* by which ice-cream is put into cones"? In such commonplace surroundings the more natural words would be *the way* or *how* or *the apparatus*. Reserve *means* for something more abstract or elevated, like "a scientist has no *means* of measuring such infinitesimal variations."

*Most* is loosely used in common talk for *almost*. We say "it's *most* noon; *most* all of us chipped in." But this is really baby talk. We ought to say "it's *almost* noon; *almost* all of us contributed." The "most" habit is deep and strong in all of us. Only constant wariness will secure *almost* in our speech. *Almost* is specially needed with—and is least likely to appear with—*all* and *everyone*. We ought to say "*almost* all, *almost* everybody."

*Myself* is properly used to intensify an *I*—"I have made that error myself." This formidable and emphatic pronoun ought not to be used to escape a plain, straightforward *I* or *me*. We ought to have no fear of *I* and *me*. It is neither difficult nor presumptuous to say that "my friend and *I* went" or that "he gave Walter and *me* some." There is no reason for using *myself* unless it is an intensive or a reflexive.

*Nice* is among adjectives what *fix* is among verbs—an empty, over-used, tiresome, childish word.

2. *Near-by* is objected to nowadays because it is usually a sham word that purports to say something, but that really tells us nothing. Why say that "we jumped into a *near-by* taxi"? Nobody could suppose that "we jumped into a *distant* taxicab." Time was when people with very meager vocabularies got on for months without *near-by*; nowadays there are people who have to struggle to compose three consecutive sentences without a *near-by*.

3. *Over*. Conservative people wonder why *over* is preferred to all other prepositions. They feel that we might sometimes be grieved *by* or worried *about* or delighted *with*.

*Ought* is, in and by itself, a verb, like *could* and *might*. It is not an adverb. With the adverbs *better* and *rather* we form the idioms "had better, had rather." But who ever heard of "had could" or "had might"? We ought never to allow anyone to see in a composition "had might" or "had should" or "had ought." There never should be a *had* before *ought*, nor should *had* ever refer to *ought*. The normal English idioms are:

I ought to have gone.  
Oughtn't I to have gone?  
Yes, you ought.

**Partake** means "to share in." We *partake* of food, or *partake* in the dangers of an enterprise. Students who try to use this word ordinarily mean "to take part in"; they should say "took part in a play," or "took part in our sports."

2. **Pertinent** means "strictly pertaining to," as in "his remarks were most *pertinent* and helped us to understand this involved question." *Impertinent* has the derived meaning of "impudent."

2. **Pervade** regularly has an object—"pervades all his *thoughts*, pervades every *portion* of the country." Of course *pervade* has also the corresponding passive uses. If we wish to express the intransitive idea that "something is everywhere present," we must use some such expression as "is prevalent" or "prevails."

**Playwright.** The second syllable means "maker of," as in *wheelwright*.

**Principal** is always an adjective form: "the *principal* reasons, the *principal* happenings." In a few common uses the noun is merely understood: "the *principal* [teacher] of a school, the *principal* [fighter] in a duel, the *principal* [person] in any transaction." Such "substantive adjectives" may be used as pure nouns, become nouns, and have their own plurals.

Otherwise the noun form ends in *le*: "a good *principle* to work by, the *principles* of physics, a new *principle* in law-making."

2. **Professor** should be used only of a person who has been appointed to a "chair" in a college or university, or in an academy that really has professorships. Teachers and officers in secondary education are not professors.

**Proposition** ought not to be a substitute for every conceivable sort of business venture or difficulty or undertaking or chance or investment or puzzle. Unless a writer designs to be slangy, he should reserve *proposition* for "something proposed for consideration."

2. **Quite** used to mean "entirely," and still conveys that idea to many people, as in "*quite* correct, *quite* well again." The word has lately been made to do duty in the insignificant, roustabout capacity of "rather, somewhat." A pleasant surprise can always be prepared for a theme-reader by using a neat *rather* or *somewhat* in place of a dragged *quite*. "Quite some" is a colloquial oddity that is trying to get into good society.

2. **Respect.** *With respect to* is likely to sound stilted and ponderous. There is a comic touch in "We were not so sure *with respect to* the other shoe."

**Ruin.** The remarks made about *fix* will almost fit *run*. Readers are shriveled up by the long, sultry level of "running" everything: "*run*



a railroad, *run* a restaurant, *run* an examination, *run* a nursery, *run* a meeting." Readers are thirsty for *manage*, *conduct*, *control*, *supervise*, *preside over*—anything but "run."

2. **Scared of** is a poor expression. Use *afraid of*.

2. **Seem.** The peculiar idiom "can't seem" is so unreasonable in its make-up that most theme-readers object to it. The natural verb before *seem* is *do*: "I *don't seem* able to do this: it *didn't seem* possible."

**Set** has many intransitive uses: "the sun is *setting*; the cement won't *set*; winter will *set in* soon; he *set out* for Boston." Most of us go so far as to say that a hen *sets* on her eggs, and are rather afraid to criticize a statement that "the cap *sets* closely over the cork" or that "a coat *sets* well over the shoulders." But many careful people do criticize those last three uses of *set* and advise *sit* or *stand* or *fit*. Do not use the intransitive *set* for any sentences like the following: "He *sits* in the third row; he *sat* for his picture; the court is now *sitting*; please *sit* down; we *sat* up late; they are *sitting* out this dance."

2. **Shall and should.** Up to the time of our Civil War most people in southern England and in New England used *shall* and *should* for the first person in stating mere fact, without implying any promise or determination.

I *shall* not see you, I suppose.

We *shall* be sorry to miss you.

We *shan't* have time.

I *should* like to know what he wants.

We *shouldn't* care to join them.

This use was extended to questions, if the expected answer was to contain *shall* or *should*.

*Shall* you get up before seven?

*Shouldn't* you like another cup?

*Shall* and *should* were even used in indirect quotations.

She says she *shall* be glad to see you.

They said they *should* have no clothes to give.

These uses of *shall* and *should* came easily from the tongues of people in their free-and-easy conversation. Even illiterate persons, who said "I seen" and "him and me were," naturally spoke such sentences as "I *shall* go if I can, but my wife she says she *shan't* be able to." They would not have known what to make of *will* and *would* with the first person pronouns. To say "I *will* be unable" would have been perplexing to them, because *will* with the first person would have meant determination—"I *am resolved* to be unable."

At the same time people in the north of England and in Scotland were using *will* rather freely with the first person, and *shall* was rapidly disappearing in the United States—even in New England. President Roosevelt, who believed in *shall*, sometimes slipped into *will*; President Taft often published expressions like “we *would* be unwilling”; President Wilson, a most artful writer, was often unable to use *we shall* or *we should*. And now the signs are that *will* and *would* are driving out *shall* and *should* in London. Perhaps *shall* with the first person is a dead idiom.

But perhaps not. Prophecy about idioms is unreliable. Teachers and textbooks dare not jump to conclusions too rapidly. They must all make some decision, judging as best they may in this period of uncertainty. Many schools still insist on the full schedule of all the uses of *shall* and *should*; other schools have decided to say nothing about these words. This book recommends the following program:

a. Do not attempt the niceties of *shall* and *should* in questions and in indirect quotations.

b. Do not consider that *I would* and *we would* are vital errors.

c. Try to use *shall* and *should* for the first person in cases that are clearly opposed to the speaker's will. To say that “*I would* be a coward if I consented” suggests that I want to be a coward, am determined to be a coward. In saying that we are unable or unwilling or in fear we do well to use *shall* and *should*.

I am afraid I *shall* be seasick.

I *should* hate to be thought niggardly.

We *shall* be slaves if we don't win.

We *should* have been robbed if we had stayed.

d. Try to use *shall* and *should* with *like*, *pleased*, etc.

I *should* like to go.

We *should* be glad to send you some samples.

We *shall* be happy to see you.

Many business houses use *shall* and *should* in their correspondence for the sake of giving a better tone to their letters. There is no question that they are wise in doing so.

e. Do not use *shall* in giving a promise or assurance. Sometimes conscientious persons, who have taught themselves to use “*I shall*,” go too far. If a friend asks, “Will you get my mail?” or “Will you take me along?” the proper answer is “*I will*” or “*Certainly* we will.”

3. So and such, if used without any indication of what the comparison is, give an effect of exclamatory girliness. “When we reached

the bank we were *so* tired! It gave me *such* a thrill to see them." The *so* and the *such* do not imply any comparison with anything in a previous sentence.

2. **A sort of** is a proper modifier for a noun, as in "he used a *sort of* forceps." But the adverbial use ("feel *sort of* exhilarated, acted *sort of* impudent") is not at all proper.

2. **Stand for** is in the same class with *make good*.

2. **Start.** See *begin*.

**Suddenly** is to be classified with *near-by* as a word that is very likely to be both tiresome and useless. Any happening must occur "suddenly." Whatever comes to our ears or eyes or nose always must be reported "suddenly" to the brain. Readers are not excited when a writer flashes a "suddenly" at them. They are likely to be exasperated by a "when suddenly" after a comma.

**Suspicion** as a verb is a bit of dialect, like "howdy." Writers who are composing a serious sentence use *suspect*.

**Take** belongs with *fix* and *get* as a word that can be used vaguely and lazily in hundreds of connections where other verbs would be refreshing. *Take* is specially likely to be repeated aimlessly in expositions. *Take place* means "to occur" and ought not to be applied to plays, dances, picnics, excursions, and the like.

3. **Than did.** Severely logical people are fond of putting *as* and *than* directly before the verb: "*as did* Cæsar the day before he died; I had no more idea of where I was *than had* Moses when the light went out." The natural English order is "as Cæsar did, than Moses had."

2. **Therefore** is a severe and aristocratic word, hardly suitable for petty affairs like deciding to save a nickel or to train a puppy.

3. **Transpire** properly means "to become known, to come to our knowledge," as in "it now *transpires* that the Secret Service knew all the time that he was a spy"—that is, this has not been known before, but now becomes known." (Students often blunder by using the word to mean "happen.")

**Unless** is always a conjunction, joining a subordinate clause: "I won't go *unless* he comes with us."

**Without** is never a conjunction in modern English; it is usually a preposition: "I won't go *without* him."

2. **Up to** is in the same class with *make good*.

**Wonderful** has done good service in our language for many centuries, but has recently softened and wilted down to a mere nothing. Every least thing nowadays is "wonderful"—"a wonderful dance, a wonderful time; a wonderful chewing-gum." A *wonderful* and a *nice* in one paragraph are sufficient to taint a whole theme.

## C. GENERAL CAUTIONS ABOUT THE MEANINGS OF WORDS

No chapter on the meanings of words can ever be entirely accurate for many years at a time, since words rise and fall, come and go, suffer unexpected twists of meaning. The list given in Section B is not a set of everlasting truths. But it opens the way to one important and eternal truth: Words are not to be taken on trust and guilelessly used, but are to be challenged, scrutinized, weighed. To use words carelessly is to be their sport and plaything. If we do not keep the upper hand of them, they will send us sprawling when we wish to make a good appearance. The five principal ways in which words deceive us are here briefly commented on.

1. **Blunders.** We are not concerned with technical terms, but perhaps the nature of blunders will appear more clearly if we give the customary names for three kinds.

a. "Barbarisms" are blunders that result from sheer ignorance of forms. If a person has never noticed that *ness* is applied only to adjectives, and so coins a word "miserness," he seems like a barbarian, unfamiliar with English as a native language. So he is "barbarous" if he writes *had have gone* or *playwrite*, since there is no such verb nor any such noun in English. Careless writers often set down a form that suits their purpose or that shapes itself in the mind, not considering whether they have any right to invent words. They may stumble upon some rare or obsolete word which is entered in large dictionaries, but the coincidence hardly makes them less barbarous. Examples of such thoughtless or wrong-headed inventions are "flitter" for *flutter*, "vulgarness" for *vulgarity*, "refreshen" for *refresh*, "rubbage" for *rubbish* (all in the *Century Dictionary*), "productive" for *productive*, "believeance" for *belief*, "craveture" for *craving*. Skilled authors may sometimes use a peculiar form without troubling themselves to see whether the dictionary will bear them out; for their instinct is superior to a dictionary. A coinage by a student—say, "a *chagrinning* experience"—may not be ques-

tioned, but the happy inventions are a small minority. Most of us have to be afraid that an effort to coin a word will result only in barbarism.

b. "Improprieties" are a transfer from a proper meaning to an entirely improper one. Thus if a student has seen "*pilfering* pennies from the till" and "the water *filters* through the sand," and then transfers the word *pilfer* to the other meaning, he creates an amusing impropriety:

The sunlight *pilfered* through the branches.

No textbook can guard against all improprieties, because the opportunities for making them are unlimited. Sunlight cannot "reflect itself," but must be *reflected* by some surface. A person can be rewarded for a service, but cannot be "rewarded a medal." Other examples of improprieties are:

I hurried as *expediently* [i. e., expeditiously] as possible.  
 She *exhumes* [i. e., exhales?] jollity all about her.  
 I want to *enlighten* [i. e., lighten] this burden for my family.  
 Ambition is the *motoring* [i. e., motivating] force of the play.

An author may smile at his errors in spelling or punctuation or sentence-structure, but he is mortified if he discovers that he has been guilty of a real impropriety.

c. "Solecism" is the technical name for a grammatical blunder, or for a blunder in idiom like the cases discussed in Sections D-H of Chapter XVIII.

2. Slang. No textbook could give useful advice about particular slang terms unless it were revised every year. Hence hardly any slang words are given in Section B. "Make good," "stand for," and "up to" originated as pure slang and may never *make good* in literature; some teachers won't *stand for* them; it is *up to* each student to keep such expressions as "cut it out" and "shy on" for distinctly modern and happy-go-lucky surroundings. Most young people have a keen sense for slang; they are startled—or even offended—if a public speaker descends to "put it over" or "come across," or if a textbook seriously uses "stand for"

and "up to." The caution most needed is this: In writing about old or literary topics don't be incongruous by dropping in phrases that are no older than yourself.

**3. Affectation.** Affectation in school style is usually a slight and superficial fault. It is caused by the false idea that "now I am writing a composition and must rise to the occasion by using some lofty expressions." If the hint is given that such straining for effect is poor judgment, the style is keyed to normal.

That is usually true. The unusual student may have a deep-seated fondness for piles of adjectives in a story, thunderous masses of words in an argument, or stilted formalities and French quotations on all occasions. For him neither book nor teacher can do more than pray that he may be born again.

**4. Technical language.** An audience is always glad to hear specific words, terms that convey a definite meaning and show the speaker's knowledge. They even welcome strange words like *killick* or "*cruising timber*." They do not, that is, object to technical words as such. What they do object to is the talk given by someone who has only technical words at his command, and so cannot make himself understood. A great scientist or inventor can explain his deepest knowledge in words that the rest of us understand; a second-rate mind can only give us a stack of technical terms that shut out the light. If a student has acquired some special knowledge of heraldry or of vaporizing carburetors or of the appropriation of nitrogen, he shows weakness and ignorance by trying to convey his knowledge with the special jargon that he has picked up. He must convert his scientific terms into human English that we can all follow. To depend on the specialist's vocabulary is to prove that he does not really understand his subject and that he has no ability for exposition.

**5. Triteness.** *Trite* means "worn out." If an adjective or a simile has been used so long and so often that its meaning is all frayed and it conveys nothing to us, we call it *trite*. Thus *wonderful*, *awful*, *near-by*, and *nice* once had meanings and conveyed to a reader some sense of marvel or awe or proximity or pre-

cision; but overuse has reduced them to mere tatters of expression. The author who first wrote "last, but not least" said something worth while. Other writers could use this a good many times before it lost its freshness; then, when the world had grown familiar with it, it was no longer an ornament, but became a faded rag of an expression. When the first author noticed that a little stream of water sounded as if it were talking to itself, prattling among the stones, he said something by writing of a "babbling brook"; after that expression had been written a few thousand times, it no longer meant anything, and now we say nothing when we use it. It is hopelessly trite. All stale little witticisms and hackneyed maxims and commonplace quotations are examples of triteness. Triteness is always an effort to gain credit for saying something brilliant by using a dull, second-hand expression.

#### D. NO CAUSE FOR WORRY

A textbook can only indicate what triteness is and give a few examples; it can only indicate the way in which slang, when it has grown almost respectable, is still slang for literary topics; a book can do no more than index a few of the more common examples of blunders with idioms and meanings of words. The chapters in a rhetoric are guide-posts that indicate the nature of the dangers in using words, and that show the conscientious student the way of caution in the thousand particulars that he must discover and judge for himself.

It is unfortunate that a brief textbook must devote so much of its space to warnings of danger, for it is likely to give the impression that speaking and writing are mazes of perilous pitfalls, where we must forever be apprehensive of falling into trouble. That is not the fact. The average student makes only a small percentage of blunders and does not need more than a fourth of the cautions given in Chapters XVIII and XIX. He has no reason for nervousness or misgiving in the use of his words if he will regard these lessons as friendly counsel about difficul-

ties that he may easily avoid. He ought to feel that the lessons are a stimulus to observe for himself the entertaining marvels of his mother-tongue.

### EXERCISES

Criticize the wrong uses of words in the following sentences. Some of the sentences contain no errors, and some contain the errors described in Chapter XVIII. In a few of the sentences there are misuses that are not spoken of in Chapter XIX. Further exercise is contained in the sentences that follow Chapter XX.

1. A dim light pervades everywhere.
2. She looks like a girl I used to go to school with.
3. Both men grappled with each other instantly.
4. I don't see why this is wrong, because in my dictionary it says that *outwit* means "to gain advantage."
5. There are now less feasts than we used to have.
6. He might be scared to fight Macbeth.
7. He might easily find employment most anywhere.
8. I kind of suspicion that Fido had known all the time what I expected.
9. The area of the Philippines is greater than that comprised in the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware.
10. Everything is all right at home—or would be if you were here.
11. Before 500 B. C. the Athenians did not have hardly any navy at all.
12. Many people will prefer to go in an office or do something similar.
13. Since the following day was nice, I started work on the foundation.
14. This ruling makes it necessary for each inspector to see every one of his men several times a week.
15. In these stories, though a great deal longer and involving much more intricate plots, we find the same circumstances regarding the interest taken in them.
16. Indeed many financially poor students work their way through.
17. Nearly all the cases that can be handled here are done so.
18. His eyes shone with pleasure at the sight of her.



19. He leaned over the desk, picked up a near-by pen, and silently wrote the check.

20. Poetry, he says, is the art of employing words to produce an allusion upon the imagination.

21. The restaurant is not very attractive in appearance, but they serve quite a nice meal there.

22. There is apt to be trouble if he doesn't speak politely to the men.

23. He succeeded in getting a good hold upon the dog and dashed him against the wall as he had done its master.

24. The manager came out in front of the curtain and announced that "owing to certain desertions" the performance could not be given.

25. If there is any likelihood of a rain, we ought to bring the shovels over to Mike's shed.

26. In our interview with the principal we ended up by asking whether a half holiday could be granted.

27. You can guess that it was an awful silent crowd that filed out of that room.

28. Roosevelt thought it was up to him to seize this opportunity for securing a right-of-way for the Panama Canal.

29. I never could get to see a performance of Houdini's, though I should like to have very much.

30. The great mountains raise straight out from that broad, calm, blue Pacific Ocean.

31. This fire-rangers' lookout sets on a projecting knob of rock.

32. The mill in which it was made was probably situated in some place that was favorable with respect to the ready and easy access to the materials.

33. He was so struck by this fancy that he implied the name of "Cigarette" to his donkey.

34. The young hound is whining as if he wanted in, but there is probably nothing the matter with him.

35. Barbers know that only a freshly stropped blade gives a clean, cool shave.

36. The day was frightfully hot; I therefore went into an ice-cream store to purchase a cooling drink.

37. The only way to take these machine-gun strongholds was to do it at night by a surprise attack.

38. I can't seem to make head or tail of this problem.

39. Fire cannot be caused unless by friction or by chemical change of some sort.

40. Everyone appears to be so glad to see you, and everything looks so natural, homelike, and attractive.

41. If we look into the question carefully, we cannot help but see that the average waiter is overpaid.
42. We shall have to make sacrifices, some of which may be enormous.
43. Due to the fact that I have to walk some distance before I reach the railroad, I am obliged to have breakfast at quarter of six.
44. Steel has come into use in comparative late years.
45. One foot above this rock is all the further the tide will go.
46. I felt very much as did Napoleon when he heard that he was to be exiled on St. Helena.
47. The use of the steam engine for "snaking" logs out of the woods is becoming more and more into use every year.
48. Now and then the stillness would be pierced by the shrill scream of an engine whistle, but on a whole everything seemed quiet.
49. The mining of gold in Alaska takes place on most all of the small creeks in the country.
50. There have been less church-goers than there were thirty years ago.
51. My duties will consist in assisting the manager of the repairing stock.
52. As you come in the room the general feeling is one of brightness and joy.
53. You will have no knowledge and will have to change the subject, without something commonplace is mentioned.
54. Your letter was such a pleasure to me.
55. My school has instilled its students with a strong feeling of patriotism.
56. Gold, silver, and bronze medals were rewarded to the winners.
57. Into a cup containing three tablespoonfuls of vinegar drop the white of an egg.
58. After many experiments the process was perfected in a comparatively crude way to that which it is at the present time.
59. When Miss Marbry met Clarence, she asked the latter whether his investment was paying.
60. When educational movies first started to be shown, serious-minded people commenced to feel differently about them.
61. The natural question is, "What should I like to do?"
62. I supposed that I had all the time in the world, when suddenly I found that my watch had stopped.
63. A little dampness or a cold draft never effects me in the slightest.
64. When the train stops at stations, most everybody gets out and runs around.

65. For the average student it is much more interesting to shoot pool or lay around and rest up for the next day's classes.
66. I felt that I had ought to do my duty toward the family.
67. I shall go in the signal corps if possible.
68. By the time they arrived at their destiny the train was almost four hours late.
69. Again he tells of the refusal offered him at the inn.
70. Sitting in the seat next to them was a young girl about seventeen years old, and real good-looking.
71. At the end of two months my friend and myself packed up.
72. An epic is a poem of quite great length.
73. Kings know that they must answer like ordinary human beings for their criminal acts.
74. This empty lot is not green, nor do any wild flowers grow among it.
75. My mother was thoroughly perplexed; for she could not refuse the invitation, and yet she dreaded to except it.
76. Then I went home and studied the majority of the afternoon.
77. She seemed to be a docile little child, but her brother told us that she was often pertinent to her mother.
78. Can you translate this French sentence for me?
79. These deer have beautiful great antlers upon which set many prongs.
80. That left quite some space to be filled up.
81. If I couldn't run a meeting any better than he can, I never should try to act as chairman.
82. Those who partake in school dramatics are sure to be aided thereby.
83. Of course there is no doubt but that they will refund your money.
84. Can I borrow your ruler for a few minutes?
85. His reading was largely comprised of detective stories.
86. Reading societies usually take place during the winter months.
87. You can imagine that I was sort of astonished to see my mother there.
88. A mirage is a kind of allusion often seen on deserts.
89. My coming home from school constitutes a journey of three hundred miles.
90. Humbert entered from the antechamber, rubbing his great paws together and working his bushy eyebrows up and down.
91. When this question started, the principal thing to be decided was the field of combat.

92. Her great reverence for the opinions of the dead solicits no surprise.

93. In Hannibal's time the crossing of the Alps was no easy proposition.

94. They begin with less chances to make fatal mistakes.

95. The group was comprised of the Secretary of War, two generals, and some War Department officials.

96. My uncle is liable to give me something pretty handsome in the way of a reward.

97. I like to get my picture taken where there is no chance of getting cheated.

98. As soon as I'm finished reading the paper, I'll call you.

99. After spending half an hour in fixing up the cabin we got all nicely settled.

100. It's funny to think that everybody in this room will be dead in sixty years.

101. Our school imbues these ideas of honesty into a pupil from the first day he enters.

102. I wish you would let me try.

103. When Pitt rose to speak, he applied to Grenville the scornful epitaph of "gentle shepherd."

104. Ice-cream is a great factor in the life of children who have money to squander.

105. I expect you think I am a bit presumptuous.

106. After tormenting me for an hour he left me be the rest of the afternoon.

107. I used all my eloquence to try to exhort some money from them, but they didn't seem the least enthused by my efforts.

108. I should have liked to see him when he was at his best

## CHAPTER XX

### FIGURATIVE WORDS

#### A. WHAT A FIGURE OF SPEECH IS

Roosevelt was a mighty hunter, who despised everything that was not straightforward. He once went hunting for an expression that would show how he despised a certain trick of evasion in writing. You can see that he had a hard task, for you do not know what "a trick of evasion" means; it must be made definite to a reader. In Roosevelt's mind, as he sat at his desk, the course of thought was: "A man feels certain that a lie has been told; he decides to declare publicly that the statement is a lie; but instead of asserting it flatly he hesitates, evades, and finally takes all the life out of his denunciation by a qualifying phrase—*in the opinion of many people*. Thus the good that might have been done by an outspoken denunciation is destroyed. How can I explain, strikingly and instantly, the way in which *some people take the life out of their statements?*"

The inspiration came to Roosevelt: "I will say that any such qualifying phrase is like a weasel, an animal that sucks the life-blood out of its victim and leaves a limp, dead body when it slinks away." He wrote about "weasel words." By his comparison he conveyed his idea easily, definitely, picturesquely.

All speakers and writers have felt the need of comparisons of this kind for illustrating ideas that are beyond direct hearing and seeing. "Our country," for example, is an idea beyond the reach of our eyes; we can see only certain cities or stretches of country, and can be acquainted with only a few thousand citizens. So we are accustomed to compare this huge aggregate of social forces—this mighty complexity which we cannot directly touch or see—to a ship or a person, or even to an eagle. If our country

is developing prosperously, it is said to be like a ship under full sail; if the country is in peril, it is said to be like a ship in a storm or a ship that is headed for the rocks; the President is likened to the captain or to the pilot at the wheel. When our country was new and raw among the nations of the earth, we compared it to a tall, rawboned, homely-looking man who is humorous and shrewd; we drew a picture of this man and called him "Uncle Sam." If we thought our country was the strongest and most majestic on earth, we compared it to the strongest and most majestic bird. We are accustomed to seeing "Labor" pictured as a brawny man wearing a leather apron and holding a hammer. We are familiar with the pictures of "Capital," "Anarchy," "Death," "Father Time."

In all these cases some "abstract" idea is made vivid by likening it to something that we can see and touch—to something "concrete." Whenever we thus indicate that an abstract idea is similar to a concrete thing, we create a "figure of speech." The cartoonists are great makers of "figures." If the country is angry because mobs have disturbed the peace, and if we are all determined to put a stop to this violence, that whole situation is an abstraction. The cartoonist makes the situation concrete by drawing a picture: Uncle Sam, a very angry and determined old gentleman, with his sleeves rolled up, grips an ugly man with both hands; he is going to punish the man and teach him some sense. The fact that bread costs a great deal is an abstraction: we cannot see the cost or put our finger on the condition of the wheat market. This phase of our daily life may be pictured as similar to a loaf of bread twelve feet high carried uphill by a staggering, bent, lean family.

Poets have constantly made figures for illustrating general truths by comparison with concrete things. For example, it is a general truth that we can imagine more than we see in humdrum daily life. Keats likened his imagination to a bird in a cage:

Open wide the mind's cage-door;  
She'll dart forth and cloudward soar.

Novelists are constantly in need of a figure to show vividly what emotions are like. W. J. Locke says when Paragot faints after reading a letter: "His abstinence from food and drink, his tremendous effort of will, the strain of the interview, had brought him to the verge of the precipice, and it only required the shock of the letter to send him over." Such a statement—especially if it comes in an essay by Carlyle or Emerson—sometimes confounds a literal-minded student who does not understand comparisons, because the words say that "he fell over a precipice," whereas he actually fell on a flat floor. Most students, though they are not confused in that way, find it hard to explain what is compared to what. The collapse of Paragot's mind in a faint is compared to falling over a cliff; the physical and mental strain is compared to some force that brought him to the edge of the cliff.

The novelist made his comparison without any *like* or *as* to introduce it. Such a figure is called "metaphor." If *like* or *as* is used, the figure is called "simile" ("he looked *as lonesome as* a piazza chair in winter"). There are other species of figures that have the forbidding names\* of "metonymy" and "synecdoche." With these rhetorical classifications we have no concern, but shall use the common name for all illustrative comparisons—"figure of speech," or simply "figure." A figure of speech may be carried out through a whole book, called an "allegory"—as in *Pilgrim's Progress* or *The Faerie Queene*. A figure may be elaborated to make a parable, as in the story of the talents or of the woman who hunted for a lost coin. A figure may be carried out in a complete sentence, or introduced in one clause, or suggested in one word. Whether a figure is wrought out at great length or is

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\* "Metonymy" is the use of some concrete name for a more abstract idea ("Washington" for government of the United States, "press" for journalism, "sword" for military power). "Synecdoche" is somewhat similar; a part or unit is used for the whole, or vice versa ("sail" for ship, "a Daniel" for a wise judge). Personification is a way of speaking about things as if they were human (the *smiling* cornfields, the *angry* clouds). "Apostrophe" is an address to things or to absent persons, as if they were present and listening (e. g., speaking to the sun or to a soldier who has long been dead). "Hyperbole" is exaggeration (e. g., "skyscrapers," "waves mountain-high"). "Antithesis" is a studied contrast of ideas ("He had no wit, no humor, no eloquence; and yet his writings are likely to be read as long as the English language exists").

implied in one word, the nature of it is always the same: something abstract or not familiar is compared to something concrete or familiar.

Suppose that some fortunate and powerful person is troubled by a bit of gossip about his dishonesty. Though the story may be false and may have no effect upon his career, still it perpetually troubles him. What may this cause of irritation be likened to? A common figure is to call it "a thorn in his side." If a shop window attracts children to look at it with greedy eyes, what figure will fit the case? The common figure was thus written by a student: "The children were lured by this shop window *just as fish are lured by bait.*" If we speak of "genius of the first water," we have borrowed a figure from the diamond merchants, who use the expression to describe a stone that is flawless. If we say "has the whip hand of his men," we have taken a figure from coach-drivers. If we say that a teacher "hammered the subject into us," we use a figure from carpentry. The sailor's life has yielded many common metaphors: "ship of state," "a wide berth" (i. e., clear space between a ship and the shore), "standing at the helm," "on a different tack." We have common figures from farming, book-keeping, baseball, railroading—from all sorts of sports and occupations.

Slang is often figurative, though the origin may not be known: "have a hunch," "give it the once over," "give him a glad hand," "on his uppers."

### B. OLD AND DIM FIGURES

As long as a figure of speech is new, or if it is so phrased that we are bound to see what the comparison is, we realize that it is a figure. But if it becomes popular, is widely used, and grows commonplace, it loses its figurative power. Thus *standpoint*, if we stop to think of it, must mean "a place where we stand to take a view of things." But the word is so common that we are likely to use it without thinking of any figure of speech; it acquires the somewhat vague meaning of "mental habit" or "way of thinking"



or merely "idea." That is the natural course which all popular figures tend to run. Observant people remain conscious of the figurative value; others forget the original comparison. Those who have never used a whitewash brush may be unmindful of the figure contained in *whitewashing* a reputation. As old-fashioned scales grow uncommon, we forget that *balance* is a figure of speech. We even reduce *foundation* to a vague equivalent for "large factor in" or "useful part of." The knowledge of origins of words is always dwindling; in time the figurative values disappear. When all educated people studied a great deal of Latin, they were conscious of the old figures in *pertinent*, *except*, *reflect*, and a thousand others; as the study of Latin dies out, all knowledge of the figures dies. All words, so far as we can guess, must have been figures originally—borrowed, that is, from some concrete meaning to illustrate a more abstract idea.

So every word in our vocabulary is somewhere on the scale that reaches from brand-new coinages of the latest slang to a worn-out figure that is beyond the knowledge of the most learned philologist. The wisest authors are not required to be alive at every instant to the original figurative values of their words. Indeed too much effort of that kind may be the worst folly, because words often shift away from original meanings to derived meanings that are quite different. *Educate*, for example, once had in it an *ex* meaning "out" and a *duco* meaning "lead" but *educate* does not therefore mean "to lead young people out of their ignorance." A false nicety in using figures may lead to bad blunders.

### C. MIXED FIGURES

What the world does require of authors is that they shall have their eyes open when they make a comparison, and that they shall not make two conflicting comparisons at the same time. A theme-writer is, within reasonable limits, held to the same standard. He may speak of the "viewpoint" in Washington's *Farewell Address*, for that is one comparison. He may in

another sentence compare the *Address* to the "foundation" of the thought of later statesmen. But he may not reasonably jumble the two comparisons together in one clause as this writer did:

This *viewpoint* of Washington's has been the *foundation* of much of the thought of later statesmen.

He has said that "a viewpoint is a foundation." We may consistently say that "later statesmen have looked from Washington's viewpoint" or that "Washington's ideas have been a foundation for later thought," but we cannot sensibly use both figures at once.

"Mixed metaphors" have always been a source of merriment. For generations the world has laughed at this old example:

I smell a rat; I'll nip it in the bud.

Each comparison is in itself an accepted metaphor. We may compare some secret purpose to a rat that can be smelled, or we may compare it to a noxious flower that is to be destroyed before it blooms. We may not compare a purpose to *both a rat and a flower at the same time*. Other outlandish absurdities are:

The hand that rocked his cradle did not foresee his greatness.

I call upon the government to kill this serpent which is fast paving the way to the ruin of our great people.

Of course not many students ever indulge in "a serpent which paves the way," but not infrequently they make less noticeable blunders, like the following:

Such an *outlook* on life is bound to *sour* a man's disposition in course of time.

Macaulay is unable to give us a *picture* of a character which is not *flavored* by his own thoughts and personal opinions.

These mixed metaphors declare that "an outlook soured something," that "a picture is flavored." In each case the writer was betrayed by the use of two common figures of speech, which he used as mere colorless words, forgetting that they are figures. Macaulay's writing may properly be compared to a *picture*, or

it may be likened to a mixture that is *flavored*; it must not be compared to both in the same breath.

A mixed metaphor most commonly results from just such carelessness with one word: the comparison suggested by a noun is in collision with another comparison suggested by an adjective or a verb. For example, *food* is a common metaphor for "that which sustains the mind"—as in "*food* for thought, a book that is not good *food* for young minds, a comedy that furnishes no mental *food*." Young writers often employ this metaphor, especially those who have heard of Bacon's "books that are to be tasted, chewed, digested." So a boy might properly speak of the *de Coverley Papers* as "food":

As food for twentieth-century minds the *de Coverley Papers* seem to me rather faded.

At the end of his sentence, in writing an adjective that modifies *food*, he has set down another metaphor, quite in conflict with his first one. We use *faded* for many nouns ("*faded* glories, *faded* smile, *faded* memories"), indicating in every case something that once was bright and fresh, but that now has withered like a flower. We cannot properly speak of "*faded* food."

The following sentence contains a typical example of this sort of error:

Such *unbalanced* views *poison* the mind.

A view may be compared to something that is "off its balance" or to a "poison"; but if we read that "views are unsteady things which poison," we feel that we have come upon some cubist chemistry.

#### D. GOOD, CONSISTENT FIGURES

Skilled authors manage differently.

The sun struck the water so sharply that it seemed as though the sea would clang like a burnished gong.

There is a daring and curious figure: the light from the sun ———— ed to a hammer, and the sea to a gong. The author does

not say that the sun "struck brightly" or that the sea would "clang like a bright surface." He bears in mind the one comparison with which he sets out.

A house on the sea-coast has a sort of amphibious parlor, with sea-shells on the mantel-piece and spruce branches in the chimney-place.

Since *amphibious* means "living both on land and in water," the author uses this figure to describe a fire-place that has decorations from both land and sea.

One book reveals what is hidden by cutting a vista through some jungle of fact; another bears us to some mount of vision and shows us a panorama.

One book is described by using one consistent figure—"a cutting through a jungle"; the other book is described by another figure that is consistent within itself—"a view from a mountain." The two metaphors work together as a team, showing two kinds of books.

#### E. JUDGING WHETHER FIGURES ARE GOOD OR BAD

Only a minority of amateurs attempt comparisons as elaborate as the last three examples; and when they make the effort they are so alert that they usually succeed in pleasing a reader. If figures were all of this kind, there would be less need of a chapter on similes and metaphors. But all students often use the more common kind of "semi-metaphor"—a word whose figurative meaning is somewhat dim—and often carelessly combine with this another word that conveys a different and inconsistent figure—thus:

Food is a great *factor* and must *play* a prominent part.

Another important *factor lies* in the fact that the resorts are easy of access.

This *factor* has been *cast into the shade* by recent improvements.

A factor is some force which "actively tends to produce." If we begin by comparing *food* or *nearness* or a *vaporizing process* to a "factor," we must not also at the same time compare it to

"an actor on the stage" or "something that passively exists" or "something that has been shaded."

Figures may be faulty for other reasons than incongruous mixture. For instance, a worm is usually regarded as such a repulsive thing that it would probably be impossible to succeed in comparing a beautiful woman to a worm. Again, if a person wrote of someone's success as "a parachute which bore him aloft to fame," the comparison is an untruth: a parachute cannot elevate anybody. There are other ways in which figures may fail by displaying bad taste or lack of knowledge. But such mistakes are exceptional. It is generally true that an artist in words may successfully compare anything to anything else under heaven. Students who say that "you cannot compare" are almost certainly on a wrong track of criticism. Still farther from the truth is a statement like "heaven cannot *be* a mustard seed." No good metaphor asserts that one thing is another, nor even that it is *entirely similar to* another. A metaphor says no more than that "in one particular there is this resemblance." Two figures that well illustrate false criticisms are these\*:

My heart was as cold as a boiled potato toward the little donkey.  
The cold hand of death stalked into our midst last week.

An untrained student is likely to judge that the first figure is poor, because he dislikes "boiled potato," feeling repelled by the suggestion. Yet that is just why the figure is excellent: it shows a "cold potato" state of feeling. The same student is likely to decide that the second metaphor is "all right," failing to see that death is compared at the same moment to a hand and to something that walks. It is such mixture of comparisons that causes nearly all the errors in the use of figurative words.

The writing of a mixed metaphor converts serious purpose into a joke. Analyzing other people's failures and successes will help to keep us from making embarrassing errors in the use of figurative words.

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\* Quoted from Herrick and Damon's *Composition and Rhetoric*.

## EXERCISES

Analyze the figures of speech in the following sentences, in each case answering two questions: 1. "What is compared to what?" 2. "Is the comparison consistent?" If any consistent figure seems disagreeable, explain briefly what makes you dislike it.

Each of the first fifteen sentences contains one mixed metaphor. Beyond that point there are a few sentences that contain no figure of speech, and some others that contain excellent figures. The exercise is in estimating the worthiness of each figure in a heterogeneous collection.

1. Cañons, rivers, and crested peaks instil in your veins an atmosphere of height and red-blooded energy.

2. It seems to me that the Masonic Order should be upheld and cultivated throughout the country.

3. There you have the keynote of the Chinese standpoint.

4. When Mr. Sexton also refused, our last ray of hope burst like a bubble.

5. Even if he has been sowing some wild oats, I believe he will come out on top in the end.

6. Should this commerce, however, be a stumbling block, it should be regulated.

7. The Y. M. C. A. has played one of the most useful—if not the most useful—of the factors in helping tempted young men.

8. We may liken the investment in stocks to the heart of the commercial machine.

9. Disease followed the wake of alcohol and lurked in its trail.

10. These agitators have embarked upon their most dangerous enterprise in order to crush all the opposition of Capital.

11. The Spanish War, far from being a blot on our national honor, was really a step in the right direction.

12. There has spread over the boys of the United States a great wave of patriotism, which has taken possession of the mind of almost every boy, and which has injected into the boys as a whole a great desire to serve their country.

13. From his point of view we were making a most distressing noise.

14. When any man with just a little degree of common-sense gets down to the bottom of this ponderous question, it seems as if the good wind blows continually toward government ownership.

15. These bitter feelings of disappointment were cast into the shade by the poignant grief which now wrenched and twisted his heart.

16. One of the boys angrily gave the frail wall a kick, and at such rough handling it rebelled.

17. From the combined standpoint of low first cost, low running-cost, and low expenses for repairs this car has met and defeated all its competitors.

18. Far off to the north were a group of mountain-ranges raising their purple and majestic heads in scorn and defiance to this untrodden country below them.

19. With every inch of their sails pulling like a mule they skimmed over the water.

20. Hemp is a vegetable product that was originally valuable for its seed, but that is now grown for its fiber.

21. Our physical and moral standards are better off when they are under the guidance of our parents.

22. Shortly after he graduated from college he decided to sacrifice the demon tobacco to his health.

23. The curtain of heavy smoke pours out from the dark, black smokestacks and shuts out the picture.

24. Cuba is a thorn in the side of our great nation, and will remain a thorn until incorporated into our Union.

25. The rubber which is to make the sole of the boot is passed through a machine which gives it the "crisscross" pattern familiar to us all.

26. The ardent young Frenchman's imagination was kindled.

27. Just as soon as women climb down off this man-made throne and try to enter into the men's arena, they put themselves in a new light.

28. A tangible step in the right direction has been taken by electing Miss Saxe as secretary.

29. At that time only the edges of the forest had been nibbled away by the lumbering operations.

30. This dazzling success of his enemy plunged him into the deepest gloom.

31. As you watch [from a car-window] these gray stone walls, they all seem to blend together like the strands of a cobweb, and thus produce a rather wearying effect on the eye.

32. Europe meekly turned the other cheek to the haughty Prussians, and as a result the world was plunged into the bloody vortex of war.

33. I was caught up in the strong current of the mighty river of people who thronged the Avenue.

34. Mr. Barter marshaled the arguments before his son in such a way as to show him the straight and narrow path.

35. What was said between them when the stricken family left them alone no one ever knew; but when Anne fell into a coma, Lincoln stumbled, blind and groping, out of the death-chamber.

36. Armstrong's ability to brandish his wide knowledge rapidly in debate made him a perfect tower of strength for our team.

37. All such reports spring from sources that are contaminated by the officials.

38. Then there were the noon hours when we could lie under a shady tree and watch the clouds, like puffs of smoke from some great universal engine, go lazily drifting by.

39. His dignity, because it was seasoned well with a sense of humor, was never ruffled.

40. Everywhere in Webster's day the war between the white man and the forest was fierce, and the hatchet has not yet been buried.

41. She was forced to come down from her elevation of ancestral dignity and walk on the level with the rest of us.

42. The prairie was splashed white with the flour from the freight-cars that had been smashed in the wreck.

43. She really knew a great deal about botany; but when she ventured into the field of astronomy, she was sailing under false colors.

44. The jar of this recent family quarrel could still be seen in their strained efforts to appear good-natured.

45. In the rear of the cavalcade was a young sergeant who was humming a tune and thinking of the pleasures of a straw bed after the fatigues of a hard day's duty.

46. Mountains are geological noses and, according as they are Roman or pug, show the characteristics of a region.

47. Satire and sarcasm were the machine-guns of the oratorical avalanche that he poured upon his opponents.

48. In an arc light the electric current jumps from the end of one stick of carbon to the end of another, forming a bow, or arc, of great brilliancy.

49. Milton's work was on a lofty plane and laden with spiritual allusions.

50. If the fish didn't bite, his thoughts always did. Like the fish they ran in schools, but unlike the fish they ran in all weathers and in all seasons.

Sentences 51-60 are spoiled by the use of some word in a contradictory way, or with a wrong meaning—for example:



- a. His *absence filled* us with dismay.
- b. He was weighed in the *scale* and found wanting.
- c. One such *gem* of thought *weighs heavily* with an audience.
- d. The winds had *steadily* been *variable*.

51. Slowly at first, and then gaining force as they sped through the crisp air, sparks of snow were falling.

52. The extensive reading of old classics and the complete lack of attention to modern authors have clogged the value of school training.

53. Never was war waged on such gigantic scales as during the World War.

54. Next to the first days at school, when you feel you are about as insignificant as it is well for any self-respecting human being to be, the first day in society is the watermark of a girl's emotions.

55. Shelley was an anarchist of the first water.

56. These opportunities can be carried on most effectively in the city.

57. These beautiful little flowers of poetry stand very high in the critic's estimation.

58. Thus his strong nature was hewed down by the buffetings of fate.

59. The Red Triangle even reached out its services to the prison camps.

60. This showed the determination of the Hellenes to stand fast and hang on to their liberties.

In each of the following sentences (61-74) there is a mismanaged figure of speech. State what change should be made in each case, either by supplying a different metaphor or by altering the phrasing.

61. The first warning puff of the locomotive and the clang of the bell imbued renewed strength in me as I struck out on the home stretch. [He was running to catch a train.]

62. The future of the whole world lay in the balance of how that war ended.

63. Getting safely out of such a scrape is about the most delightful sensation that a boy can possibly go through.

64. Aside from the immorality standpoint of the movies, a large part of the other pictures which are shown are trash.

65. He did a wonderful work in spreading the importance of keeping up this organization.

66. His coach and horses are admired to their fullest capacity.

67. I think it stands out in all the students' eyes as the most weighty event of the day.

68. In all this turmoil of internal war and foreign enemies we hope that the real Russia will emerge victorious.

69. Nevertheless every one of us can if necessary work ourselves up to such a height of hate that we can for the moment take a fiendish glee in putting our fellow men over the "Great Divide."

70. This latter statement is greatly illustrated by the large number of students who have to work in the evening.

71. This pig-iron is only roughly pure.

72. The boys had a splendid opportunity of walking into the shoes of the business men who have been called to arms.

73. Congress was fairly overrun by the threats of the railroad brotherhoods.

74. The diplomatic relations between the United States and Canada have not been united for the last six years.

### MISCELLANEOUS EXERCISES IN FIGURES OF SPEECH

Decide whether the figures of speech in the following sentences are good, or somewhat mismanaged, or decidedly bad. Explain the mistakes concisely.

75. He had a name that sounded like the ejection of a worthless tenant.

76. That morbid, sleepy atmosphere, which is at present the densest cloud in the classroom, would show a new light.

77. The United States was as a prop behind the leaning fence of Democracy, and each one of our boys was a grain of dirt that helps to keep the prop intact.

78. We thought our salvation lay in taking every opportunity to use the sword to tread the narrow path of peace.

79. These amateur prospectors finally fall in love with the adventurous life and become full-fledged "desert rats."

80. That one little hiss had torn the heart out of the sensitive girl.

81. A newspaper without a cartoon is like an engine without steam—it is not a success.

82. When I took that ride on the elephant I felt like a fly on a shaky mold of jelly.

83. At that time the cream of the intellectual people were trying to stop the flood of irreligious ideas.

84. With their fine scenery the Californians have some of the best roads possible, so that they can drive to all parts of their treasure by

automobile, thereby being hindered in no way from reaping a harvest from all the advantages combined.

85. Of course our plays for school production have to be of the first water for stirring situations.

86. This shaky condition of their finances would decidedly dampen the enthusiasm of investors.

87. Then the demon Wind, with a cutlass between his teeth, would cut the crest of the huge wave clean away and hurl tons of water upon us.

88. This act was received by the queen with much disgust.

89. A sturdy framework of common-sense is the bed-rock of his most ethereal poems.

90. If he looks toward the top of the chimney, he will see inky smoke belched forth into the air like rolls and rolls of black cotton, freshly picked.

91. Under this new law the natives, drunk with their new freedom, began to arise and start a reign of terror.

92. To me this essay is as stupid as a last-year's telephone directory.

93. School dramatics give the student a foundation that may be obtained through no other source.

94. Rollo felt as lonesome as a volume of Milton on a news-stand.

95. In the fall we awake, only to find our brains covered by a cobweb of forgetfulness or a thick coating of rust which it takes us half the autumn and winter to sweep away.

96. That word "bashful" at once froze poor Marlow to a bone.

97. The thunder of your words has soured the milk of human kindness in my breast.

98. This fearful wish was the last straw of a desperate man.

99. His bids for popularity in his class were continually being outworn by some selfish action.

100. That acute little analysis was spun out of his own brain.

101. A permanent adjustment of labor troubles would lift up our nation from its present high position to a loftier pinnacle than any nation in the history of the world has ever stood upon.

102. When the situation becomes too tight, they simply escape to the mountains.

103. At that distance the houses appeared like little toy blocks seated among the green hills.

104. Grabbing the poker, he hurled it bodily at the window.

105. Burke says that England will merely be blunting the growth of her own trade.

106. But the building of ships went blithely on as they poured more

and more money into the Will-o'-the-wisp quest for sea supremacy.

107. It is suggested that Pekin make public the secret treaties at once, thereby eliminating much of Japan's threatening attitude.

108. Our ancestors did not churlishly sit down to the feast of Magna Charta.

109. It is well to split up our sentences into long and short ones.

110. This new young vampire, the cause of Marjorie's woes, had completely wound Penrod in her web.

111. He had to launch his plan on the stony ground of an almost universal opposition.

112. Artie's new humbleness was a good exponent of a chastened point of view.

113. The modern kings of Europe rest easy at night because they long ago looked out of the window, saw which way the wind was blowing, and did not monkey with the weathervane.

114. He thought it was his duty to attempt to bring about some remedy.

115. Under cover of the din of the clanging engines two shots quickly following each other were heard by no one.

116. This German silver caster amidst the tin dishes was suggestive of a tattered, exiled king among barbarians, and the majesty of its native position compelled respect even in its degradation.

117. The big city is like a mother's knee to many who have strayed far and found the roads rough beneath their uncertain feet.

118. During the last twenty years a little bug has crept through the United States annoying people as it passed from place to place. This little animal is known as the "vaudeville bug," and its bite has been the cause of much trouble. Men and women, young and old, have all bowed down before it, and have grown passionately fond of clog-dancers and barber-shop tenors.

### MISCELLANEOUS EXERCISES IN MISUSED WORDS SUPPLEMENTARY TO CHAPTERS XVII-XX

Make a concise explanation of the faults in the following sentences. Some of the sentences contain no errors.

1. The landlady was a brisk, amusing little body, who soon informed us that her husband was own cousin to a United States Senator.

2. Among the many phases, all of which I am unable to state right now, which the young officers must know—and know it well—are the following.

3. I couldn't see as it would make any earthly difference whether the deck was cleaned or not.

4. He carried the valise that he had stolen from the twins with him.

5. The authors of the *Bay Psalm Book*, being scholars, did not know whether it was right to use rime in the psalms.

6. The new knife could not cut a piece of wood to Tom's sorrow.

7. This is a true incident that happened to my friend and I.

8. The dignified old king merely looked around at me, at distant intervals, somewhat as I have seen a benignant tabby-cat look around to see which kitten was meddling with her tail.

9. It remained a mystery to all how Tom had got the ten tickets with the exception of the boys from which he had bought them.

10. I see only bad in too often attendance.

11. You have to look up all the geographical names which come in the lesson in your atlas.

12. Like a badly sewn strip of white braid a macadamized road ran between the green skirt of the hills and the foamy lace of the river's edge.

13. To save looking it up I give below the names of the articles that will be useful to you.

14. In the center of the mill is a set of saws, set at certain intervals apart.

15. Both of us wanted to outwit each other, and so we were pumping each other for straws to show which way the wind blew.

16. In one corner he had fixed up an old table with some apparatus on top.

17. The birds flittered about in the branches.

18. A man who cares to get right down to brass tacks will see that the securities can never pan out as advertised.

19. The new rule is not so very worse than the old one.

20. Nearly all the afternoon was spent in conversation with a few useless attempts to start the engine.

21. The man who lets such ungovernable passion get a hold of him will certainly pay the penalty somehow.

22. For a few weeks the poor fellow seemed to get some better, but it did not amount to much.

23. The father of the family is a very pleasant gentleman, who, although he is not handsome, is very nice looking.

24. It is so far advanced to any other section of the United States that it has grown to be the center of the world.

25. The coroner of Newton said that Miss Pride had died a natural death after her body had been carefully examined by several doctors.

26. So situated as to afford him the rest and seclusion which a busy

man requires during the hot days of summer, he owns a typical New England farmhouse.

27. Franklin was eating a huge roll with two others tucked under his arms.

28. Bryant's father took *Thanatopsis* to an editor, who, when he had read it, he exclaimed skeptically, "This was not written by anyone in America."

29. Nearly all these people go home by trolley, so they are naturally overloaded.

30. His doting mother can't seem to do enough for him.

31. As soon as the ice is thick enough to bear the logs, they are dumped on to the ice with a line of logs around them whose ends are chained together to keep the logs from floating away when the ice melts.

32. That country road was always a streaming flood of brown people clothed in smoochings from the rainbow, a tossing and moiling flood, happy and noisy.

33. Beyond the factory district the city is really quite nice.

34. By such a law the tenement districts would be greatly minimized.

35. This has become a question of the efficiency of labor with regard to unions.

36. Thinking hard, he at first does not notice her.

37. Then he placed them in a sort of a box arrangement near the stove.

38. If Malcolm had not fled to England, he might not have secured the pious Edward's help.

39. Of the fourteen million people who go to the movies daily in the United States the greater percentage of them go for the simple purpose of laughing.

40. In each town or city around the camp there are soldiers' clubs or recreation rooms where the soldiers can go and sit around and smoke.

41. We will spend the rest of our life in paying a huge indemnity.

42. With such a pitcher they couldn't help but win.

43. This, however, is the purpose of preciously few of these productions.

44. It was this dread of poverty which made the killing of girl-babies so prevalent in India in the old days before England laid the iron hand of her prohibitions upon the slaughter.

45. Such searing advice about "literary finish in your compositions" casts me into the depths of despair.

46. In "A Daughter of the Gods" one of the scenes that the audience

was at a loss to explain how it was done showed Annette Kellerman among her mermaids.

47. I am sorry that I can't be at the dinner that Mrs. Holmes is to give because I have a previous engagement.

48. In our lesson yesterday the length of the paragraphs were very different.

49. Another theater that is still worsely ventilated is the Ardmore.

50. In such a raid there are bound to be less Japanese killed than Chinamen.

51. When in doubt of how to spend a dull afternoon, he would toss a coin.

52. Back of her stood her maidservant holding a long peacock-feather fan, which carried out its function by electricity.

53. His father was Bacchus, whom many people thought was the father of Mirth.

54. Studying the field, Bray determined to try another process.

55. In the *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers* I first took any interest in the Englishmen of the eighteenth century.

56. When a man had once tasted these regal joys, he could not be contented with the dull monotony of a crimeless life afterwards.

57. Our lessons in school are comparatively easy to those lessons which business men have to learn in real life.

58. After waiting a half an hour for another train I was able to get home just at midnight.

59. They may treat you with respect, but you can detect a slight feeling toward yourself.

60. Comus says that from hearing the Lady's song while his band is concealed that he knows something holy is near by.

61. Of all the instruments that seem the most attractive to me this one heads the list.

62. This store is full of appreciative gifts.

63. An old minister was annoyed by the fact that all the women in the congregation looked around every time the door was opened to see who the late comer was.

64. During a long cruise in the summer a boy cannot help but become healthy.

65. So many girls have rushed into this attractive business because to them it seemed something easy to learn.

66. I sometimes wonder if this unrealizaton of danger is not a wonderful aid.

67. The ocean furnishes a means for a cooler climate in the summer.

68. Of all the hunting-passions that burn in the breast of man there

is none that can lift him above discouragement but the one—the royal sport of killing his fellow men.

69. Bear-tracks had been seen at a place five miles north of where we were a few days before.

70. Of course in such a crisis we were all awful eager to see the newspapers

71. He can secure a place as an office-boy or in some minor occupation in most any business.

72. The only duty of our vice-president seems to be to run the Senate.

73. We can never have peace with Mexico unless by force of arms.

74. It's as spooky here as a Brooklyn artificial-limb factory at midnight with the gas turned down.

75. It is absolutely foolish to ask such a question to a crowd of ignorant men.

76. Seven of us planned to go on the same train, so as the trip from Spokane would not be so tiresome.

77. I am now preparing to take a nice summer trip.

78. He decided to invest what little money he had and, if this turned out successfully, he would buy the store.

79. Somehow they didn't enjoy looking over, but rather to edge over toward the cliff side as if to balance the car better.

80. As we parted from the scene, we could not help but feel that such bill-boards are sort of a sacrilege.

81. We should all like to return to the old town.

82. Are the realities of life ever worth half as much as its cheats?

83. The ocean is so desperately monotonous that I no longer wonder at the cruelty of pirates.

84. She blued him—and almost starched and ironed him—with a scornful look from her azure eyes.

85. I have the curtain fixed so that the rising sun wakes me at just the right time.

86. If your bent is in cows or horses, you will enjoy visiting the stock-farm.

87. Leaving the small town of Manitou by automobile for Pike's Peak, we have to start early in the morning to be able to get down before dark.

88. This changed the people that looked at him with glaring eyes to stone.

89. I ate my breakfast in a most expedient manner.

90. Not so long ago I had to go in one of the ice-cream parlors.

91. Such remarks may be heard everywhere at most any time.



92. Sometimes stones were heated, and the food was laid upon them.

93. Here was an idea which, the instant it was suggested to him, he became completely absorbed in it.

94. He strived throughout his active life to gain freedom of the press.

95. Athens kept her freedom and kept on with ideals of a republican form of government.

96. Walking over to a table in one corner of the dining-room, his keen glance fell upon a newspaper.

97. It was therefore vital to his interests to do away with Banquo. This he does.

98. This bracket being taken down, we perceived a red glow in the wood beneath.

99. On a brisk autumn day my cousin and I decided to set some traps for muskrats, whose recently constructed holes we saw the day before.

100. In the tropics it rains almost every day, and it causes rank vegetation.

101. But as two wires had crossed which caused a short circuit, these wet cloths had little effect.

102. He says that if everyone were to go and live in the woods, drink the mountain streams, and wear nothing but frieze, that they would be niggards of God's gifts.

103. I now jumped out of the car to see what had happened to the poor child, but being bewildered, the chauffeur jumped out right after me and picked the boy up, thus doing the right thing before I had done anything at all.

104. At sunset the clouds are tinged with a delicate pink from the setting sun.

105. In the presence of this renowned desperado common men were modest of speech and manner, and in the glare of his greatness even the dazzling stage-driver dwindled to a penny candle.

106. There are a lot of things that we don't know yet where they are.

107. Words do not come into existence through common use or do they drop out by this use.

108. Mr. Robinson, his new boat being launched, heard someone say, "See how she scoons along the water!"

109. For this reason we need their support very bad.

110. All his bonds being in one safe makes him doubly apprehensive.

111. Our supply this month is low on account of last month's supply not being able to be used.

112. We held a council of war just like those generals in war do. and we decided to make a sudden attack.

113. The nature of these pranks vary a great deal.

114. We heard him muttering unintelligent words to a few customers.

115. The wings of our airplane were covered on both sides in the same way the tail was done.

116. Of course I, as all girls, think my chum is a wonderful girl.

117. I do not know as any series of that name really exists.

118. Anyway, the government closed the amateur stations last spring, so that I should not be able to use my apparatus anyway.

119. "Johnny," said Mr. Winthrop, stirring uneasily, "I really didn't mean to say that you were ugly."

120. In this great question everyone is able to help.

121. A dog that has been thus fooled by a coyote takes up a humble position under the hindmost wagon, and looks ashamed, and hangs his tail at half-mast for a week.

122. I had to get off of my bicycle.

123. Where is that fellow that you told me his father was going to the Philippines?

124. We started off for New York on the road going south. It is a state road, so there is a great deal of traffic on it, even amounting to traffic congestion on some of the busier parts.

125. You cannot help but be filled with pleasure as you gaze about.

126. You see the change of schedule is only a slight one, but so fixed that it eliminates all school activities.

127. This had to be similar in color with the woodwork.

128. Except for the fact that his visor was raised he might have been about to engage in battle from his appearance.

129. In my mind the best section of the United States is a small section in its area, but wonderful in its beauty.

130. In the lamplight we noticed how black his hair was and how nobly his nose arched.

131. So the boy or girl who has worked is not so very worse off than the boy or girl who did nothing.

132. There are so many things one can do in the summer, and there are so many reasons why summer is really the time for work.

133. I wondered how I would feel if I stood upon a real high mountain such as I had read about.

134. It was a story in which—at that period of my boyhood—I was very much interested in.

135. Our school teaches you not merely studies, but also it is its purpose to make you efficient, out of school as well as in.

136. The effect of all of Johnson's privations and sufferings which he endured in those first years of London life were apparent all the rest of his days.

137. At the end of the period I am speaking of the danger was considerably increased.

138. To get such movie comedy as we ordinarily see at the theater it takes more work than most people realize.

139. The English and the American language differs considerably in vocabulary.

140. He will see a picture, and always the same picture: the wide desert of smooth sea all about; the rim of the moon spying from behind a ray of black cloud; the remote top of the mizzenmast shearing a zigzag path through the fields of stars in the depths of space.

141. Sometimes he and his partner quarreled, but these never lasted very long.

142. The lightning now began to flash with a redoubled roar.

143. Gaston received a severe wound in April from a piece of shrapnel, which healed very slowly.

144. I fixed one corner of my bedroom into a little laboratory.

145. The cause for the preference is due to five important things.

146. The sound of that noon whistle came very brightly to our ears.

147. Previous short stories had been very different than those which made Poe famous.

148. We may, if we are wise, accumulate a small amount of money which, when deposited in a safe keeping-place, will always be as a safeguard against a financial calamity in the future.

149. Originally the Kimberley crater was a perpendicular hole packed solidly full of blue rock or cement, and scattered through that blue mass, like raisins in a pudding, were the diamonds.

150. The blizzard lasting several days, in the latter part of it Herman found that his supplies were running low.

151. The floor when seen from the track above resembles what some would term as a Chinese puzzle.

152. Granger answered the phone and found it was a message from his uncle's lawyer.

153. To this button a collar is hastily attached with a tie following close behind.

154. After moving up closer the strange crumbly limestone of which the geyser is made can be seen.

155. Until a student has learned to unconsciously vary his sentence structure, let him read it over carefully and change his sentences when **necessary**.

156 In 1875 no one could have foretold of our present labor difficulties.

157 We go in the same place and see these people listening to a man who sells "cactus oil."

158. Soon, it is to be hoped, young people may enjoy themselves here without being afraid of any moral results.

159. I certainly much prefer to spend my time listening to the advice of some great man than to attend some theater and watch a clown make a fool of himself.

160. The interior is finished in light wood, so that the light will be reflected and make everything bright.

161. In this way he can view scenes that he never could get to see otherwise.

162. Hester is the kind who seem to spread jollity and kindness all about her wherever she goes.

163. This stretch of scenery is quite interesting to most all travelers.

164. To be sure, some conveniences are lacking, but on a whole the equipment is fair.

165. His first writings for the daily press—being character sketches—became popular at once.

166. A theme composed entirely of long sentences will tend to make it tedious.

167. The noble lord says that what makes England's commerce with America is because of the natural preferences of trade.

168. They look as if they would like to be anywhere than where they are.

169. One can travel on the train for miles and miles without seeing a house, and one will see mile after mile, as far as the eye can see, the richest soil of the United States.

170. Hardly had he taken the binoculars from the case than he fell in a faint.

171. His reading consists greatly in biographies of explorers.

172. The paragraph brought out the point about the number in school at the end which made it weak.

173. We could not seal them on account of them not having been inspected.

174. Like most everything else, fountain-pens have their good and their bad points.

175. In the paragraph about the sulphur matches some parts of it are obscure.

176. They sway the minds of the people by telling them of the untold miseries that will result.

177. They had gone out to California to see if the climate would benefit Andrew's consumption.

178. We were no sooner out of bed, when the bugle blew.

179. This excessive excitement may have injured the school some.

180. So you can see at a glance that the cost of shipping materials in would cost a good deal.

181. Then we hurry down hill, talking all the way, and run in the subway.

182. Three minutes had now elapsed with the result that they returned to their respective corners of the ring.

183. The worst fault of it was it gave too much space to details about the packing department.

184. Beecher's fiery eloquence soon extinguished the jeering of the audience.

185. Our commencement could not have been improved upon by almost any other school.

186. My hook had scarcely touched the water than a mackerel was fast on it.

187. By putting long and short, loose and periodic sentences together a composition will sound a great deal better.

188. He stayed there ten minutes when he decided to sit down.

189. The climate in Northern New York ranges from forty below in winter to a hundred and five above in summer.

190. With the continued dropping of the glass Captain Harstrom's opinion of South-Atlantic weather had an even greater shock than before.

191. Father promptly put his foot down on our little wave of excitement.

192. The bout was very slow with neither man getting a decided advantage.

193. In the little cove where the stream runs in there is lots of old logs.

194. Now she mocks him—now when he cannot do anything in his self-defense.

195. The hero is a little boy who has been lost and for whom his mother (because the father is dead) has been searching for ever since.

196. Such a fusillade of abuse finally made the porter boil over with rage.

197. Tomorrow morning, unfortunately, I have to hurry back to catch a train.

198. When the policeman discovered the lad with his eye at a hole in the fence which he had made, he arrested him.

199. By choosing the proper times and places for canoeing, the sport may be said to be perfectly safe.

200. With this woman was a young fellow who I was sure was her son.

201. Bitterly he walked away into the fog and darkness.

202. From such a play a boy is likely to maintain many bad ideas.

203. I set out in the canoe toward a man that was fishing from a little boat to see what the name of the town was.

204. The minister went into a long dissertation on why one shouldn't be lazy and, if one is, how it can be remedied.

205. There are many great questions to be answered and which will not be answered until certain untruths are exposed.

206. The less money there is spent for sodas, the more there is to go in the banks.

207. Persons as a whole do not like things that will benefit them.

208. Take this into consideration, and one must conclude that the "daylight saving" law was rightly repealed.

209. There is an additional rush as the last straggler hurries in the door.

210. They began to feel a little resentful and that Mr. Miller was cheating them out of fifty cents.

211. Thus the contrast between what her life was and what it might have been was made more apparent to her.

212. Our tide of uninterrupted victory seems to be forging ahead under full steam.

213. I believe that the real reason is the natural desire to get rich quick without paying for it.

214. With a slight motion of the leader's hand the three ruffians tied the Duke to his chair and placed him in a huge cylinder.

215. Pains then speaks of the three robbers, two of which he says are arrant cowards.

216. The money obtained by these subscriptions has been surprisingly great.

217. His perpetual harping on "slow and careful" dissolves all our enthusiasm.

218. If we make sentences of any one kind without interruption it grows monotonous.

219. So of course Harry thought he ought to try to act just as he (the professional).

220. There he met the girl who he knew was made simply to be his wife.

221. Cultivating a love of poetry will kindle all your daily thoughts.

222. When the Doctor learned that Mrs. Thrale had married, he threw every memorial of her in the fire that met his eye.

223. A bench stands against the wall on one side of the teacher's desk on which the teachers sit during prayers.

224. His nonsensical, airy talk weighed heavily upon us.

225. As a traveler Emerson did a great deal of it.

226. A bird flew down lightly, unafraid, from a branch of the tree above her.

227. One of the theaters had a petition in the papers and flashed on the movie screens that if you approved of them to sign your name.

228. These are invariably the leisure class, who have more time during the week and cars to go riding in on Sunday and other pleasures.

229. He neither had put the lunch in nor was there any place to buy something to eat.

230. I can't believe that such writers mean for us to believe them literally.

231. She was quite unable to make out whether Aunt Annie was right about ministers or not.

232. All our little extravagances were cut right to the top notch in this effort to save money.

233. Tony's favorite sport is drinking ale, and you notice it in his conversation and acting all the time.

234. Walking a little farther down the hall to the right is the dining-room.

235. Every stool was filled and many were standing.

236. She begged her husband, whom she thought was a robber, to spare their lives.

237. Such a deep question soars far above my poor little intellect.

238. After taking account of all these propositions, the argument against my idea is only slight.

239. Now, with regards to your second idea, we will make you the following offer.

240. After much patient searching I found a little small leak near the drain-pipe.

241. If I could have a thousand years more of life, I might in that time draw near enough to true Romance to touch the hem of her robe.

242. Bryant says that on "the long path that he must tread alone" he will be buoyed up by the thought of God's guidance.

243. Chapman's Homer is a vast mine full of nuggets for the philologist and the lover of poetry.

244. Her lovely face was as entrancingly beautiful as ever the Lord set on mortal shoulders.

## PART FIVE

### DETAILS OF THE WHOLE COMPOSITION

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#### CHAPTER XXI

#### FINDING MATERIAL FOR ORAL AND WRITTEN COMPOSITION

##### A. MATERIAL FOR STORIES

Everyone who has lived sixteen years, even of an entirely commonplace life, has been through experiences that will serve as the foundations for stories. Some tramp made a peculiar remark which must have meant that he had once—and there is a story under way. A dog that had troubled us, and that we had designs upon, died in a way that—a story is waiting to be written. The letter that I forgot to mail, the hat of which I was so proud, the raffle ticket that I secretly bought, the scream that I heard at midnight—any such slight affair may indicate an opening situation and a turn of events to a changed situation. For a story does not succeed because it is based on a romantic fact, but because some situation—however petty in itself—is developed in a realistic way. A student who had been captured by bandits might construct a poor plot on that excitement, while another who had earned a dime might convert the petty experience into an entertaining story. Success with a plot depends upon making a turn of events lifelike.

Facts may be obtained from older people, who are usually glad to tell of some story-like experience they once had.

Every day the newspapers give us facts. Usually the tragic events—like shipwrecks, collisions of trains, or accidents in



mines—are poor material, though they may start our thoughts on the road to a plot. The smaller and more personal items are more likely to yield returns: “a traveling salesman is held for ransom in Mexico,” “burglars enjoyed luncheon,” “capture boy bent on big Indian hunt,” “junkman’s trade with children,” “German machine-gun for Troy.” If you put yourself into one of these situations, a narrative begins to form itself. If you were the salesman or one of the bandits, if you were behind the stove when the burglars came, if you saw a twelve-year-old boy who had stolen money and bought a carving knife, if you were a father whose coat had gone to the junkman, if you were a gun made at Essen and mounted on a city square in America—if you put yourself in contact with one of these facts, you find a change of situation suggested, and that is the beginning of a plot.

We need not remain tied to the fact that strikes our attention. Our mind is not a machine that must stay where it happens to be; it may go from “burglars at lunch” to “Italians at work,” or from “machine-gun” to “mainspring.” There is no foretelling what the thoughts may do if we stimulate them by glancing through a paper and leave them free to jump where they like. Any guessing about a stranger’s motive may lead to a story that a class would enjoy if you stood before them and told what you had invented.

As soon as we have some nucleus that strikes our fancy, we may begin to invent. A plot must of course be true to life, but it need not be—probably will not be—a true history of any actual occurrence. A story-teller’s business is to forge a shapeless mass of something that happened into the pleasing design of something that might have happened. If we decide, for example, to deal with “the child who stole his father’s coat in order to trade it to a junkman,” we must heat the subject in our imagination by thinking (as shown in Chapter II) “what sort of child? with what motive? what kind of junkman? what kind of father?” When we are acquainted with the people, we decide upon the limits: where to begin with the opening situation, how

to introduce the turn of fortune, what the second situation is, and how it may be developed as an unexpected and interesting climax.

A common source of plots for themes is the books read in class or the plays that students have seen. Outlining a whole novel or a whole play seldom results in a good theme, because omitting so much detail leaves the story thin and bare—like the gaunt girders of what was once a building. Nor is the outlining of a large structure likely to prove good training: it is too much like reporting in a sketchy way certain items of another person's work; the job is not really our own. A better way of using literary material is to choose some one episode that can be made to stand by itself as a complete whole, and to shape this into a composition with a beginning, middle, and end. This sort of effort is often good training in planning, proportioning, and leading to a climax. A more original way of using literary material is to invent an episode for the characters that a novelist has given us—for example, something that must have happened, though the author told us nothing about it; or a different conclusion of his story.

A common device of students—always a risky one, sometimes improper, and occasionally dishonest—is to reproduce in condensed form a short magazine story. To pass off the work of another as our own invention is—well, the process has an unpleasant name. Older people who do the same thing with other forms of property are put into the penitentiary. There is no call here for speaking of intentional dishonesty; what needs mention is the unintentional, innocent appropriation of an author's work. It comes about in this way: a theme-writer sets his mind to work at planning a plot; insensibly the mind slides into the track of some story read months before and only dimly remembered; on this old path it moves along rapidly; at the conclusion the writer believes that his imagination has been productive and fortunate; he plans his story and tells it. The teacher is struck by the ingenuity and force of this theme. "Where did

you get your idea?" he asks the student. Then—and often not until then—the theme-writer realizes that he has been passing stolen goods. Reproducing a short story may be a good school task; teachers often require it as an oral exercise. What we are talking about in this paragraph is an absolutely different matter. If the requirement is "an invention of your own," the student must warily challenge his own mind, asking himself, "Where did I get my idea?" If reproducing someone else's plot is allowable, the writer should always give his source in a footnote. "Acknowledge the source" is always good advice.

Professional story-tellers have found their material in all sorts of places and by all sorts of methods. Shakespeare's genius did not care to invent plots for plays, but hunted for material in story-books and histories, altering the sources as much as was necessary to fit them for the stage. Milton went to the Bible for the material of his great epic, elaborating the simple statements as much as his poetical fancy liked. Dumas would lie all day upon the deck of a ship, spinning and weaving his own thoughts out of his own brain. Each individual has his own way of going to work. Those of us who complain that we "can't think of a subject" must hunt for beginnings in books or newspapers; others can find material by setting the imagination to work on some acquaintance or some stranger; others find their minds inventing within themselves.

#### B. MATERIAL FOR DESCRIPTION

[Sufficient comment on narrative material is given in Chapter III.]

Most students would be highly indignant if assigned the topic "a description of a square yard of ground." Yet as a matter of fact that is a huge subject, containing an infinite variety of detail. A geologist could not compress into a book all that he would have to say if he attempted a complete description of the wonders of a square inch of gravel. He could fill a book with

the descriptions of different phases of one grain. That particle is composed of variegated materials formed in a remote age under extraordinary conditions of heat and pressure; it is largely composed of water, which enters into the structure of its crystals; one of its constituents is a bit of quartz; one of the many peculiarities of quartz is the power of "polarizing" light. There is no end to all that would have to be written to convey a full description of a grain of gravel. It is composed of millions of molecules, and books have been written about the nature of one molecule, which is for a scientist a complicated structure of large dimensions, composed of atoms, each of which must be composed of units of force that are far beyond our ken at present. Every smallest portion of matter of the most commonplace kind is a store of marvels about which an eager scientist could lecture entertainingly.

So the universe is full of entertaining topics for description—from atoms to the Milky Way. Most of us are limited to the middle region of animals and human beings and portions of the place where we live. We are surrounded by a sea of subjects. A small, cheap microscope, if applied to the head of an insect, will show more than can be crowded into three pages of theme paper. A glance at any corner of a familiar scene will reveal a topic for description: a street-crossing, a barn, under my desk-cover, a tree in May, a bird's nest, a telephone pole, a brick, a full moon on the horizon, a game of checkers, a bull-frog, a good horse—anything is material for a mind that is willing to shape what comes into its factory.

Indeed the raw material is so copious and so obvious that "finding" it is largely a matter of sorting it. A student who lacks practice, or who distrusts his ability, will do best by selecting some subject that has animals or human beings in it—like "the barn at milking time," "the factory when the whistle blows," "9:30 at school," "morning in a Pullman car," "my home on Sunday morning." In any such block of material we must seek the elements that will make a good theme.

1. **Discard what everybody knows.** If a home that we choose to describe has no doors, that fact is worth mentioning; but an ordinary number of doors and windows is not worth specifying. Who cares? A reader does not wish to be informed that a clever dog has four legs or that a flight of stairs "leads up from the first floor to the second." He already knows about those legs and stairs.

2. **Discard the mere charting of particulars.** To say that "a door at the left leads into the hall, and one in front of us leads into the dining-room, and the one at the right opens on to a piazza" is not description. It is a list of memoranda for an architect or a burglar. To say merely that "one stream of people is continually crossing State Street while another stream at right angles is always crossing Van Buren Street" is to say only what is true of any intersection of busy city streets. The real task is to continue such a general statement by showing how those two streams in Chicago are different from the crowd at other city corners. We cannot depend upon items that are generally true of every other "home" or "busy corner" or "school yard," and must not set down a mere list of facts that give no impression of this particular home or yard.

3. **Select what is different.** "My home" is a difficult topic because in so many ways one home is just like another: nine tenths of all the country homes in the United States have a living room, dining-room, kitchen, and hall on the ground floor, some stairs that "lead up," and some bedrooms and bathrooms on the second floor. Naming such customary arrangements is not giving a reader the slightest conception of what "my home" is like. That home is different from every other one in the world. Why? in what ways? In proportion as we get definite answers to these questions we give a picture, a description. There are human beings in it, different from all other people in the world; they have special little customs different from those in other homes; the living room is peculiar in some ways, else the theme-writer would not know his error if he entered

another house by mistake. What are the differences? One way to select the material is to compare this home (in your mind) with other homes, to take note of the differences, and to utilize them for theme-building.

**4. Select some part.** Teachers are always glad (unless they have given contrary directions) to have students limit the topics set. If the general topic is "a description of my home," each writer may well select some part at some special time. A home is not made up of doors and rooms, rooms, rooms, and stairways, but of the customs of a small band of people who live together under one roof. A glimpse of them at some one minute of the day will be a truer description than a whole pile of architect's blue-prints or a complete inventory of the furniture.

**5. Select an impression.** If the assignment is "a picture of a building," so that human beings cannot appear in the theme, the writer's object must be to convey the impressions that would most interest the eye of a human visitor. The theme that tells only of "how long and how high and how many windows and chimneys and closets" is not giving us any impression of the whole. It is not doing the work of an eye or a camera. True description shows us "how you feel about the whole thing if you are a human being looking at it." The two following extracts from themes illustrate the value of selecting an impression. The first is sensible enough in its way, and the second is by no means charming or ingenious; at first thought the contrast between them might not seem striking. But notice how different the purposes of the two writers are.

a. Leading from the hall, downstairs, are four doors. One of these leads into the vestibule. The next, to the left, goes into the dining-room. This room is light and airy, having three large windows. There is a cabinet at one end of the room containing glasses and dishes. Directly opposite this, at the other end of the room, is a serving table. To the left of this table is the door which leads into the kitchen, and to the left of that is a sideboard. In the center of the room is a round table which is at present being set for the noon meal.

b. When originally built, the house was of the type common to that size of town: large, square, firmly made, and with a small iron porch in

front. The house was built this way in the time of my great-grandmother, but after my grandmother had been married and my grandfather had returned from the Civil War, they had the house done over. An addition was made to the back which took away the harsh look that the square house had left. Some years ago, when cement had come into use, the family had a large porch of cement built, which went half way around the house. The roof was held up by pillars of the Doric style. A cement railing was made all the way around the house. And in this form, painted white, the house has remained to this day.

The second paragraph may have too much family history in it, and we are irritated by that "house" that comes in seven times; but we are in contact with a human being who has selected the special facts about this particular building and has given us an impression of the whole of it.

6. **Time and place sequence.** The writer of the second paragraph employs another useful device in choosing material: he shows by a time order how the house developed. Though a description ought not to wander off into narrative, an order of events is often a good guide for a writer and a pleasing addition for the reader. Always a necessary guide, and always essential to a reader's comfort, is a place order. Details must be selected by some plan that is obvious and easy to follow.

"My home" has been used as an example in this section because it is a familiar topic that illustrates all the usual errors and successes in finding and assorting material for description.

### C. MATERIAL FOR EXPOSITION

A university professor once wrote an amusing skit on the characters of A, B, C, and D as those men's characters are revealed in algebra problems. Such a bit of humor, which only a witty person could think of or carry out, may not be a model for the rest of us, but it shows that the dreariest and most unlikely subject can be explained in an entertaining way. No subject is in itself inhuman or uninteresting.

Every student knows about some process that is not understood by all the rest of the class. Even the washing of dishes

is an art that could be entertainingly explained by an amateur of talent: the sequence from glasses to kettles, the problem of hot water that is not too hot, how to speed and when to be slow, rinsing, wiping—this is a petty subject, may be disagreeable, and is certainly not to be recommended to the majority of students as suitable for an oral composition; but it illustrates the possibilities that lie in everyone's experience.

How did you improve your batting or serving or driving? There were steps in a process: you used to do poorly; you got some advice, and then did some analyzing for yourself; you applied an idea, which failed to work; you had better luck with a second experiment; you now have some special trick or device that helps. What were the steps?

Every class of thirty students must be able to furnish three hundred good subjects from experience—such as “learning to dive,” “the foundation for a pavement,” “the mechanical milker,” “a magician's trick,” “the mixing of cement,” “the need of dentistry.”

Almost as real as personal experiences are some of the descriptive articles in periodicals like *Popular Mechanics*, *National Geographic*, *Literary Digest*, *Scientific American*. Such material must be used with caution, for it will yield a writer no training unless he makes the ideas his own (perhaps by looking up some added information on points that are not clear to him), and then writes without any reference to the article. He will receive small benefit from reproducing too brief or too simple an article, because his planning and proportioning are all done for him. But a somewhat long article, which can be digested only by a person who has read thoughtfully and planned for himself, may furnish an excellent topic.

A better way of accomplishing three good objects at once is to find material in books of reference in a library. Opening an encyclopedia three or four times at random will probably suggest some novelty that you would like to know more about. You may happen upon *lottery* or *midden* or *navy* or *opera*. When



you have read some portion of an article that has roused curiosity, you look up what another encyclopedia says, and then inquire for a special book or for the periodical index. This means (1) getting information, (2) learning to use a library, and (3) training yourself in putting newly acquired knowledge into good form for a reader or an audience.

#### D. MATERIAL FOR ARGUMENT

Questions suitable for argument in themes are rare treasures. But in any school there will always be a few topics that have aroused lively differences of opinion. There may have been a proposal to alter the school government in some way, or to make new athletic requirements, or to enforce some new prohibition. If there is difference of opinion between faculty and students or between two groups of students, the question can be argued before the class.

The country at large is always agitated about some matter of public policy. It may be a way of dealing with Alaska or the Philippines; for years it has been a way of dealing with Mexico; there may be some new phase of the immigration problem; fights between capital and labor are echoed in schools; there is always some political issue that students joke about or get angry about.

History sometimes yields topics: "Was the United States justified in beginning the war with Spain?" "Was our country justified in acquiring the right of way for the Panama Canal?"

An argument is always likely to be better if a speaker feels that one side is true and the other side false. If a topic is assigned, the student must consider that "finding material" is partly a matter of "finding feelings about the question." If he is left to select his own question, he should always prefer the one in which he takes most interest.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE ONE PURPOSE

The architect of a school theme must know at the outset what one result he wishes to accomplish, and must lay his plans with a view to that. The successful speaker sees the end when he begins to plan; he composes his first paragraph as the first step toward the result. The second paragraph is part of the unified plan for carrying out one purpose. From the beginning an audience is made to feel that each helps toward one effect.

#### A. PURPOSE IN STORIES

The purpose in a story is always, as we saw in Chapter II, to provide an interesting change of situation. All preliminary description is worse than useless unless it prepares the way for that new situation; any trivial action of a character is confusing rubbish unless it helps toward making the change more noticeable or exciting or surprising or convincing. Students are often misled by their reading of the first half of skilful magazine stories: they suppose that they see an "introduction," or some dialogue that is entertaining as a side-issue, or some description that is put in just for good measure. Hence they imitate this false supposition and write "introductory or descriptive stuff" without any clear idea of making it contribute to one effect. More often they fail by writing of "several things that happened"—that is, by not excluding the items that confuse the one impression which they wish to convey.

The faulty use of superfluous matter is well illustrated by the following paragraph, written as a class test on the topic "Finding Captain Absolute's Sword":

When Captain Absolute saw his father approaching, he at once turned up his collar and walked in another direction. Sir Anthony

could not be fooled, for he was quite certain that the person was Jack. He went up to the fellow and spoke to him. At first the fellow denied that he was Absolute, but soon admitted his identity. Sir Anthony felt something under his son's coat, but Jack said it was only a trinket for Lydia. Upon opening the coat Sir Anthony found a sword. He wondered at it, and forced Jack to tell why he brought the sword with him.

Through the first four sentences our attention is kept on "Captain Absolute's identity"; the writer's purpose seems to be to show how the Captain tried hard, but finally failed, to evade his father. The student knew this episode and let it flow on to his paper without observing that it had very little to do with his topic.

Another student took command of his knowledge, made his ideas obey orders, decided to tell of "Finding the Sword" as a little story, planned to use only what would contribute to that effect, and so carried out his one purpose effectively—thus:

When Sir Anthony places his hand on the Captain's breast, he feels the sharp point of the sword and cries, "Zounds, sir, what have you there?" Captain Absolute replies that it is a trinket for Lydia, a bauble for his beloved. His father rips back his coat, revealing the short sword, and is astounded. "Trinket! A bauble for Lydia!" he cries. "Zounds, sir, are you going to cut her throat?"

These two ways of telling a brief anecdote—slight as they are, and exaggerated as the fault is—illustrate the whole principle of the necessity of one purpose. In the second theme every sentence is planned with reference to the last word.

On page 23 is given an opening of a student's theme—"John Grier stepped out of the gates of the penitentiary." This was a 400-word story entitled "A Little Child Shall Lead." The author emphasized the revenge that was burning in the convict's mind, and went on to show how he had always been regarded as a blackguard without a heart. In the fourth paragraph the convict enters the judge's house to murder him. In the fifth paragraph he encounters the judge's little daughter, who says:

"Are you the doctor? My papa is so ill. I called up the doctor, but he hasn't come. You will help my papa, won't you? Please, just for me"—and, saying this, she jumped into his arms and kissed him.

Then the writer's purpose is completed in the last paragraph.

"Yes, little girl," said John slowly, "I will do what I can to help your father." She felt for him again, but he had gone. He was walking down the street. If the prisoners in the penitentiary could have seen him then, they would have realized that he had a heart. He was crying.

This may not be an example of a wise choice of plot; it may seem melodramatic, improbable, or too sentimental. But it is a good illustration of knowing at the outset what the one purpose is, what the architectural design is, and of writing from the beginning with that purpose as a guide in the framing of every sentence.

We do not mean that the writer foresaw all the details of carrying out his plan. But he always knew in what direction to go and what the destination was.

## B. PURPOSE IN DESCRIPTION

The purpose in a description is always to give a reader the sensations that the writer had. Hence the writer must make an analysis: "What caused my sensations? I must select for the reader those details that will make the object seem different from other landscapes or gathering-places or pieces of machinery or outdoor amusements; and I can get those details only by observing what produces the sensation of difference in my own mind."

When Roosevelt wished to describe Grant's character, he faced a difficult task; for Grant was a quiet man, not showy or clever or peculiar or striking. Roosevelt carefully selected the traits that marked him out from many great generals.

Grant was no brawler, no lover of fighting for fighting's sake. He was a plain, quiet man, not seeking for glory; but a man who, when aroused, was always in deadly earnest, and who never shrank from duty. He was slow to strike, but he never struck softly. He was not

in the least of the type which gets up mass-meetings, makes inflammatory speeches or passes inflammatory resolutions, and then permits over-forcible talk to be followed by over-feeble action. His promise squared with his performance. His deeds made good his words. He did not denounce an evil in strained and hyperbolic language; but when he did denounce it, he strove to make his denunciation effective by his action. He did not plunge lightly into war, but, once in, he saw the war through; and when it was over, it was over entirely. Unsparing in battle, he was very merciful in victory. There was no let-up in his grim attack, his grim pursuit, until the last body of armed foes surrendered. But that feat once accomplished, his first thought was for the valiant defeated: to let them take back their horses to their little homes because they would need them to work on their farms.

*The Strenuous Life*

Roosevelt's purpose is much more than to select a number of traits and put them down in a row; he groups them so as to bring out one dominant trait: "Though Grant was a hard and unrelenting fighter, he disliked fighting." So far as possible the purpose in every description should be to mass the details in a way that will bring out the one principal feature in which an object is different from all others of its kind. If an anecdote, which may be useful for bringing out a character, is used, it must be regarded as a detail, must be kept subordinate in length and importance. The most common fault in character sketches written by amateurs is a wandering away from the central purpose to telling the story of what the person did. Not infrequently an oral composition that begins as a description of a person becomes a pure narrative in its latter half.

That is the same weakness that was spoken of in Section A, with reference to "Finding the Captain's Sword." The topic is not followed. Teachers of all subjects in high schools continually reiterate the same demand: "Notice what the topic is." If some task is set in algebra or history, if an answer to a certain question is demanded, it must be the student's purpose to do that task, not some other one. Failure to notice the topic and to follow it is the cause of many a low grade. The failure has wrecked many themes. "Notice the topic" is a motto that some

teachers are tempted to carve on the wall of the class-room. In writing a descriptive theme our first duty is to observe the topic; our unswerving purpose must be to keep within the bounds of description, to arrange the details that will show how the subject is different from others of its kind.

A writer need not say anything about differences; it is not necessary to set up a comparison in the theme. The advice in this section means that a writer must notice what the differences are, and must write about those features that distinguish his subject from all others of its kind.

### C. PURPOSE IN EXPOSITION

In an attempt to explain something the guiding purpose must always be to consider what the reader does not know and to set down the information in some definite order that he can easily follow. Perhaps the reader does not know the technical words; then we must use descriptive terms that are generally understood. Perhaps the reader does not know the difference between *latigo* and *hackamore*, between *port* and *starboard*, between *sedimentary* and *igneous* rocks, between *guard* and *tackle*. Most of us have had the experience of being taught a game, and have wondered why the instructor plunged into the midst of "dead man's hole" or "tenace of clubs." The reason is that he forgot the first principle of explanation: "Consider what the reader does not know." We have all experienced the difficulty of giving directions to a person who inquires his way; we have the facts in mind, but to analyze what the inquirer does not know, which items he needs most, in what order he can best understand them, is a hard task.

General advice about exposition cannot accomplish much; we learn the art by experimenting with a number of themes and noticing what effect we produce on an audience or a reader. But the purpose that must animate every kind of effort is well shown in the contrast between the two following themes on "building a snow fort." The first is not badly written, for the

facts are set down in a straightforward way. But how much would the boy in Cuba learn from it?

Dear Juan:

Since I wrote you, something has happened which no doubt will interest you. Three days ago it snowed. Now since you live in Cuba, you, of course, have never seen snow, and probably have never even heard of it. But in your school, when I was there, you were studying science and learned that a cloud was nothing but vapor. Up here in Indiana, when it is very cold, the vapor is turned into a soft, white substance known as snow. It then falls to the ground. You can imagine the vast quantity of snow which would fall if a great many clouds were to break at the same time. So much snow fell last Saturday that, when it had stopped, five inches of snow lay on the ground.

We at once went out and prepared to make snow-balls. The remarkable qualities of this frozen vapor are shown when I tell you that by taking a lot of it, and by squeezing it, what was once soft now becomes hard as stone. As I said above, we went out and made these snow-balls so that we could have a battle with these as ammunition.

One group of fellows started to build a snow-fort. This consists of rolling big snow-balls into such a position that they will form a square. Then they are securely frozen together by packing snow in all the gaps. The walls of the fort, when they are completed, are high enough to cover a boy up to his head.

Now, having tried to explain what snow, snow-balls, and snow-forts are, I will tell you about our snow-fight. Our side held the fort; the other formed the attacking party. The former consisted of five fellows, besides three little ones to make our snow-balls; the latter had nine boys, who were supposed to be able to have better aim than we. After a little preparation they attacked us. But since they were over-confident, we easily drove them back. The second time that they charged, two of us, unseen, slipped out of the fort and, as our opponents triumphantly were about to enter our weakened fort, we attacked them on their flank. So surprised were they that five of them immediately surrendered, while the rest fled. So by strategy we defeated them.

Hoping to see you in a few months, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Arthur A. Lowe

Dear Frank:

It's too bad you've always lived in Honolulu. You never have any winter and don't know anything about snow. I suppose you think it is white rain. I am going to try to tell you what building a snow fort is like.

First of all I'll have to get a picture of a snow storm in your mind. If you stand out in one and catch a snowflake on your sleeve, you will notice it seems to be made up of so many little fragile crystals. If you take it between your fingers, it melts away to water. While these little flakes are falling, they slowly mount up till the snow may lie eighteen inches thick. After it stops snowing, it usually turns cold, and a brisk wind springs up. The wind blows the soft, fine snow in big drifts against the side of a barn or a hedge.

So much for what snow is like. Now I'll try to tell you how to build a fort. You must wait until the weather gets warmer, so that the snow has lost its fluffiness. Then go out and take some in your hand and crush it, and it acts just the same as mud would do. For example, you go out and get a handful of mud and make a ball out of it, while we use snow to make balls. Take this snow ball you have made and roll it in the deep snow. It will get bigger and bigger the more you roll it—the same as a mud ball would if you rolled it in sand. When you make it big enough, put it where you want your fort and start to make another. Ten big balls should be enough, if they are placed in a circle. After you have finished the balls, throw some loose snow on the top to make it even. Then take a shovel and pound it down tight. If you think that this isn't strong enough, go into the house and get a few pitchers of water, which, if you pour them over the snow, will soon freeze into ice.

If you don't know what ice is, I will have a hard time explaining. If I compare it with a big piece of glass you might be able to see what it is. You know what a glass paper-weight is. Well, ice is just like that, only it has little bubbles in it. That's the best I can do in the way of describing it to you.

I hope you have understood all I've told you, and have a fairly good idea of what a snow fort is.

Yours very truly,

Monroe

We seldom have to attempt so difficult a feat as to explain snow to a person who has never seen it, yet the purpose in all good exposition is similar to that: "Consider what the reader does not know."

#### D. PURPOSE IN ARGUMENT

Chapter V showed that in planning an argument we must begin at some point where we are on common ground with the opponent, and must proceed from there to our conclusion. That



opponent, we may be sure, believes that in his way of thinking he is guided by high ideals, by fine and lofty motives. When Washington, near the end of his life, wrote a *Farewell Address*, he was arguing; his opponents were the people who were afraid of extending the power of the federal government; they appealed to a lofty motive: "Liberty for the individual, freedom from any possible growth of a tyranny in the national government." Washington met them on their own ground, approving and applauding the desire for personal liberty, and arguing from there that liberty could be secured only by building up a strong central government. He went farther, appealing to a noble motive of pride and altruism with the argument that if the central government were made strong, our democracy would be admired by the whole world and would be a model to be adopted in time by all nations that were struggling for their liberties. In 1917 a sufficient argument for our entering the war against Germany was that we must defend ourselves against attack, but that seemed rather plain and blunt. The argument that most stirred people when it was put into writing was the appeal to the noble motive of "making the world safe for democracy." Editorials and orations and sermons that move us argue from some noble motive. An instructive, though a rather humorous, case was the argument for the free coinage of silver in the presidential election of 1896. If ever there was a subject that should have been discussed in cold blood, this was one; for it was purely a financial question, a matter of convenience and safety for business interests. The advocates of free silver did not remain on any such low level of argument; they appealed to an emotion: "Silver was wronged by 'the crime of '73'; silver must be restored to its rights." That altruistic idea persuaded several million voters who would have remained cold to a mere matter-of-fact plea based on the facts of the nature of money.

High-school debaters must not misunderstand the example of pleading for "the rights of silver." Silver has no rights, and to argue in such a falsely emotional way may be not only bad

taste but bad policy. Argument should be as sincere and sensible as we can make it. We ought never to concoct a "noble motive." But whenever we can honestly appeal to a high ideal, we have a better chance of winning the sympathy of an audience.

Most high-school students have a dislike of certain English classics that they are required to read and study; they could explain with some spirit why they believe the books unsuitable for use in a present-day class-room, and so might write good exposition of their feelings. But what about persuading that committee of teachers that adopted the classics? The mere expression of "my dislike" may not be any argument, for the value of a school study is not always measured by the dislikes of students. What higher motive could be appealed to? If we can find one, the case will be much stronger.

The two themes that follow were written as arguments against compelling students to read certain time-honored classics in school. The first one is lively, has a good tone, and sounds sincere; it will be enjoyed by those who dislike *Julius Cæsar* and *The Lady of the Lake*. But will it persuade those who like the books? Can we discover any one consistent reason? As you read the theme, note the points where the classics are called hard names and the points where they are conceded to be "wonderful" or "interesting." The writer has a legitimate objection to the method of reading classics, and brings this out well in several places. What is it? Is it an argument for not studying these classics at all?

If I ever marry and have children, I hereby swear that their education shall not involve the reading of many of the tedious, uninteresting books that have been forced upon us in "English." I may be wrong in my opinion concerning these books, but I think that a great majority of my classmates will agree with me in denouncing them. Most of these books are "classic literature," and I naturally realize their importance; but there are so many hundreds of books that belong to this class that it hardly seems necessary to keep drilling a few, over-worked, worn-out specimens into us.

With all due respect to Shakespeare and my English teacher I wish to enter a complaint against *Julius Cæsar*. Of course it is a master-

piece in itself and has never been equaled by anything of its own type written in later times; nevertheless, you can't blame a fellow for tiring of it after the fourth or fifth reading. Just ask a boy who is in the last throes of grammar school what book he is reading. Invariably he'll answer, *Julius Cæsar*. After this book has been drilled into him so thoroughly that he dreams about it, he enters high school, and there again he must meet Brutus and Cassius and old Julius himself. He begins to feel as if he knew them personally.

*The Merchant of Venice* doesn't fall far behind *Cæsar* in the matter of popularity or unpopularity—whichever you may choose to call it. Truly, it is a wonderful book—I hardly think that any of us could write its equal; but Antonio becomes too much of a good thing, and Gratiano's wit rather tedious. Your pardon! I mean, of course, if you have read the book five or six times before.

But I must not be too hard on Shakespeare—he didn't realize what he was doing when he wrote his immortal books. They say that his books were not even popular in his own day—it must have been great to have lived in those days! But, as I say, he couldn't help it. Take Scott, for instance; he wrote a great variety of poems and stories, each one more interesting than the other. Yet you ask a fellow if he has read any of Scott's works, and he'll answer, without doubt, "Yes, *The Lady of the Lake*." Pray, why do they always choose that poor lady as the subject for hours of tedious labor? Ellen was beautiful, I suppose, and her companions were brave, but were they the only ideal people that Scott wrote about?

You may think me narrow-minded and ignorant for speaking so disparagingly of the greatest works of some of the most famous authors; but variety is the spice of life, and even though some of the lesser works of these men are a little less perfect, would it do much harm to at least try them and see if their influence is less elevating to the youth than that of their over-worked companions? I have merely expressed my views and don't blame anyone. Certainly our teachers are no less innocent than the authors, for I truthfully think that there is not one of them who would not prefer some new, exciting book to the time-worn tales of Julius Cæsar and Antonio or Viola. I fully expect that these books will still be in vogue among "those who educate the minds of the young" when my children are as old as I. My grandchildren, doubtless, will also be slaves to them; and I pity them. I probably won't be able to save them from their fate, but certainly I shall not "make" them suffer!

This second theme is all built about a motive that must appeal to every teacher of literature. What is it?

As I want my children to like books, I shall never make them read any. A book whose excellence you discover yourself, without the assistance of anyone or anything, is always more loved, more carefully read, and of more constructive value in your life.

So I shall never make my children read any books, but especially shall I never make them read Shakespeare. For as Shakespeare, read willingly and intelligently, can do more for our minds and souls and for our appreciation of the real beauties of our mother-tongue, so this same author, forced down the throat of a rebellious child, incapable of understanding him, will so prejudice the young mind against English literature in general that its chief thought about any "classic" will be one of disgust and hatred.

For such a child there can be no beauty even in the wonderful lines of the immortal bard of Avon. How much more, then, will he hate Browning if that, too, is forced upon him? I do not think Browning should be read in schools. Youth likes "poetry that sounds like poetry"; we find very little of that in Browning. All the beauty we absorb from the perusal of his works must come from the meaning he expresses. The large number of contradictory interpretations of Browning, even among great scholars, proves that his meaning is hard to extract. How, then, can the average school-girl or boy get any good from it?

Tennyson, although quite different from Browning, should not be forced on any but imaginative children. The practical small boy, who intends to be a millionaire, and whose chief interest lies in electric engines, will not be interested by *The Princess* or *Idylls of the King*. Rather, he will grow to hate forever a poet whom he might otherwise have come to love in later years.

But, on the other hand, this small boy will love the many books about mechanics which are now so popular. To make his small sister read them also would, however, be exquisite cruelty. In fact, in matters of this kind, everything depends upon the nature of the children. But we can safely leave them alone, if they are the right kind of children; and they will soon get over their calf-likes for *Dan, the Boy Detective* and others of his ilk. Water finds its own level; and children's minds soon find the level of literature to which they can attain. To try to raise that level is needless cruelty, and often results in a drop from the height originally reached.

### EXERCISES

Criticize the following themes with reference to the purpose in each. In what ways have the writers been true to a purpose? In what ways have they forgotten the purpose?

### 1. A U-Boat False Alarm

On a bright moonlight night the steamer *Priscilla* of the Fall River line wound its way in and out among the lower bays of Long Island Sound. The day was July 31st, 1918, when enemy submarines were operating off our New England Coast. Travel at that time had stopped to a certain extent, because of the fact that the boats running to New England by way of the Sound had to pass an open or exposed part of the ocean off Point Judith. The submarines might easily attack a defenseless merchantman in that area.

I had been on duty in the radio room since eight o'clock and would continue to be until about four-thirty a. m. As ten o'clock arrived, the band stopped and went to bed. Things began to grow silent on the boat as the people turned in. Nothing was making a sound except the incessant pound of the great steam-engine as it drove the ship ahead through the water.

At about two o'clock in the morning yells and screams were heard. Doors were opened up and down the halls of the ship. A great commotion started. I got up from my wireless instruments and stepped outside on the deck to see what had happened. There could be seen people crowded to the railings and in the life-boats, yelling as if they were all going to perish in the next moment. I hurried back to the wireless cabin and telephoned the Captain. He couldn't explain the reason for the disorder, so he called out all the ship's officers to see if they could pacify the people. I listened-in on the wireless, ready to call for help if anything should really happen to the ship.

Soon men, women, and children began to crowd around the radio room as if it were the safest place aboard. Then the telephone bell rang. The Captain said that a drunken sailor had run all over the ship, crying, "There is an enemy submarine ready to sink us any minute. Put on your life preservers."

### 2. The Character of Gerard

In *The Cloister and the Hearth* we have a fine picture of the sort of hero that appealed to the people of the time when the story was written. Gerard is so vividly depicted that he seems to be really alive, and we remember him after we have laid aside the book and forgotten the plot in which he takes the chief part.

On the journey to Rome we see another side of his character. His friendship for the old soldier he meets is very close and lasts all his life. Together they face all sorts of dangers and hardships, helping each other at the risk of their lives. On the journey and at Rome, where he is

beset by many strong temptations, Gerard remains true to his Margaret, ever toiling for her sake to win money and fame. When he hears she is dead, the shock is too great for him, and he plunges into a wild round of dissipation. He soon is rescued from this, however, and turns his life over to helping others and showing them the will of God.

As a monk he goes back to Holland and there sees that Margaret is still alive. Although he is greatly pained by the thought of the happiness he has missed, he bears up and lives a beautiful life to the end, preaching and helping those in trouble.

### **. 3. The Manufacture of Sulphuric Acid**

Since the chamber process is used more in the United States than the contact process, I will explain it. Sulphur or some ore of it, such as pyrites, is burned, and the sulphur dioxide given off is passed through a number of chambers containing baffle plates and other apparatus which takes out the impurities. The purified sulphur dioxide then passes into the bottom of a tower called the "Glover" tower, which is filled with coke. Nitrosulphuric comes in at the top from the Gay-Lussac tower, and it meets and mingles with the sulphur dioxide, making sulphuric acid and nitrosulphuric acid, which is passed into the lead chambers. In the lead chambers a fine spray circulates, which decomposes the nitrosulphuric acid. The oxides of nitrogen remaining are then passed into the Gay-Lussac tower, where they are mixed with the remaining sulphur dioxide and passed into the Glover tower, where more nitrosulphuric acid is formed, and the excess of sulphuric acid, which is about 50 per cent pure, is collected at the bottom and may be concentrated by boiling in platinum pans.

### **4. Self-Government Is Desirable**

We, the students of Sanders High School, have felt in the past that we have not been allowed the full interest which a student body should feel in a school. We feel that we have been watched over like children, not only in our class-rooms, but also in the outside activities of our school life. Our athletics have been run by our teachers. All our clubs and organizations have had the keenest of faculty supervision. As a final straw added to all these we are told that hereafter even our school paper is to be run entirely under faculty overseeing.

We do not wish to create any bad feeling between the faculty and the students. We wish, rather, to knit the faculty and students into a closer relationship and create in the students a fiery school spirit.

. . . . .

There are certain functions in school—namely, athletics, clubs and organizations, school periodicals, and the maintaining of order—which are by their nature functions belonging to the students. If students are to feel free in the execution of these functions, they must govern themselves. Mankind is not half so much interested in things that are done for them as in things that they do for themselves. We here at school feel a keen interest, however small, in the Savings Stamp campaign, just because we are conducting it ourselves, and it is not being carried on for us by our teachers.

Under the present system of supervision by the teachers certain boys who stand well in the eyes of the teachers are appointed to carry out the plans of the teachers. Is this democracy? Our nation and all the great nations have fought for democracy, and we students at home have to put up with autocracy in school affairs. How much better it would be for the students to elect those who should lead them in these matters.

Furthermore, a system of self-government by the students would teach the students the methods of a democratic government. It would give them a clear idea of the problems involved and give them a sense of self-reliance which is such a necessary asset in later life.

A representative system of self-government would build up a strong morale in the school, causing all students to work together. It would teach the pupils to govern; it would create in them more of an interest in school affairs; and it is the only democratic way of managing the affairs of the school.

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## CHAPTER XXIII

### PROPORTION

#### A. THINK OF THE MINUTES AND PAGES

In a novel of 150,000 words an author may need a 500-word passage of description. If the same author were writing a short story of 5000 words, he would say to himself, "Five hundred words in my novel was only a third of one per cent of the whole, but it would be ten per cent of my short story. I must make the description very brief or omit it altogether." So a student who has made good use of a hundred-word description in a 3000-word story should consider whether he ought to use any space at all for a similar passage in a 400-word story. These are questions of relative length, of proportion. If we are going to write 300 words about "finding the captain's sword," there may be room for telling the preliminaries of trying to evade the father; but if we are limited to a hundred words, there is no space available, and we must begin more promptly.

Every preliminary plan for a theme must take account of proportion. The writer must consider about how much time or space he is to fill and what proportion of the total he ought to use for each part. School composition is often limited in time or space: "I have only three minutes to speak"; "the review must be at least a hundred words long"; "the editor said my essay must not fill more than a column and a half." To begin to plan without thinking of a scale of treatment is like buying "some" seeds for a garden without counting how much ground is to be planted or what vegetables are wanted. Though exact measurements and specifications of a theme cannot be made in advance, a student can always have in mind about how many pages or minutes he expects to use, can tell in a general way about how



far along his development ought to be at the bottom of the first of three pages. Oral compositions should be timed in rehearsal, so that the student can learn not to spread too far in the first minute, and not to be crowded in the last one. Every student should know how many words he ordinarily puts on one page of the paper he is accustomed to use, so that he can tell at once how far his theme will reach if some limit is set to the number of words. This mental picture of "how many pages I expect to fill" is a good practical device—crude as it may seem—for setting up the first guide-lines of proportion. Suppose, as an example, that a page contains 150 words and that the minimum set for a weekly theme is 400 words; the student can foresee more than two and a half pages of writing. His opening passage must not run on to the second page if his composition is to have proper proportions. Yet many high-school writers explain bad proportion by saying, "I got way along here before I realized where I was, and so I had to crowd things on the last page."

#### B. PROPORTION IN WRITTEN TESTS

Deciding on the right proportion is a necessity if good work is to be done in limited time. If a student has only ten minutes for this history topic or fifteen minutes for that question in physics, he is obliged to think of his scale of treatment: he cannot tell all that he knows, must omit some preliminaries, must use most of the page, or page and a half, for the important part of the answer. His aim must be to avoid that unreasonable plea, "I didn't have time to finish." There is always plenty of time to finish if a writer does not begin before the beginning and does not let some side issue swell out in the middle of his answer.

#### C. PROPORTION IN STORIES

The development of the opening situation of an ordinary story must be comparatively long. How universally true this is may be tested by examining and comparing a novel, a 3000-word story, and a 50-word anecdote. Whatever the length or

type of the narrative may be, a reader must first be made acquainted with the people and the situation in which they are involved. The great novelists are often obliged to use a series of chapters to show the ambitions and fears and conflicting motives of the characters. The same principle of the story-telling art impels an after-dinner speaker to present the persons of his anecdote with some details of their character and situation, so that his hearers may get well into their mood; then, against this carefully prepared background, he can quickly bring out the funny turn of thought.

Of course this is not saying that the first third of a story should consist of description and space-filling dialogue; no word-painting or talking is admissible unless it is developing a situation in an interesting way. Suppose, for a concrete illustration, this skeleton of a plot: "A young man is employed by a lottery company to go from city to city, buy a ticket, draw the capital prize of \$25,000, advertise his luck, and then secretly turn back the money to the company; he becomes engaged to a girl just after drawing one of his periodical prizes; he has to confess that he is really poor; she outwits the company of swindlers, so that they are glad to make her a present of the little fortune." What is the first third of the story bound to be? The reader must be kept in ignorance of the young man's occupation; the reader must suppose, as the other characters in the story do, that this hero is a guileless chap who never on any account gambles or bets. A reader will take no interest in a mere description of such a person who lives nowhere in particular and is not in contact with anyone in particular. No, this young man appears in Los Angeles, in a manicure shop, seated at a table, having his nails trimmed by a young woman. She is not any young woman who happens to be earning her living this way; she is—like every human being—a distinct individual. She advises him where to find a job. The employer is not a dummy, but a peculiar kind of man, who likes the hero, but still distrusts him. To get this situation before a reader in a lifelike way takes

space. The space is not merely occupied with words; it is full of purpose, somewhat entertaining in itself, and promising a spirited complication to come later. Perhaps the professional writer cannot place the people and conditions before us in less than four thousand words. No turn of events begins until the hero is urged to buy a lottery ticket, refuses, is teased and badgered for such scruples, and finally yields, investing five dollars. Perhaps the following change to the new situation will require two thousand words. The heroine's recovery of the prize must be more brief, for now we are fully acquainted with the three leading characters and are impatient to know the outcome. Five hundred words may round out the whole to a good climax. A high-school artist with a good instinct for story-writing is likely to arrange a 500-word theme in corresponding proportions: 300, 150, and 50 words.

#### D. PROPORTION IN DESCRIPTION

Good proportion in description is best secured by thinking, "What items do I wish to have stand out prominently for the reader?" If these are clearly in mind before the pen touches paper, if the order in which they are to come is decided upon, proportions will adjust themselves. Description knows no law. Methods of "making a reader feel it as I felt it" must be as various as the things described. More often than not the parts of a theme will be on a scale of this sort: (1) a small fraction for the setting of the whole, (2) a large part—say three fourths—for the details, (3) a small fraction for some one detail that gives a characteristic of the whole. For instance the topic "A North Carolina mountain cabin" might be blocked out in sixths thus:

1. (one sixth) Mountains, woods, trail, and clearing.
2. (four sixths) Size, logs, mud-plastered chimney, one room and an attic, newspaper-covered walls, fire-place, chickens, children, corn-bread and string-beans for supper.
3. (one sixth) Hymns around the organ after supper.

"The bears in the Bronx" might be proportioned:

1. (one seventh) The spacious enclosure.
2. (four sevenths) Visits to the different groups.
3. (two sevenths) The despondent polar bear.

#### E. PROPORTION IN EXPOSITION

The most common failure in the proportioning of expositions is the writing of an unnecessary "introduction." It is humanly possible to begin an explanation too abruptly, but teachers rarely find such a fault. What they frequently find is a first page that tells how "one morning at breakfast the talk turned on this subject, and Father said, and so we were eager to see the factory, and finally we made the trip and entered the factory"—a hundred words that waste time for both writer and reader, however bright the style may be. Such a little send-off might be in keeping for a 2000-word theme; it is all out of proportion as part of a 300-word explanation of some process.

The major part of the space should be used for explaining what is least understood by the reader. That sounds obvious, yet the fact is that only well-trained writers observe it. Anyone may investigate the bad proportions of unskilful exposition by putting a question to the next practical workman or business man that he meets. Suppose he asks, "What is a bond?" The bank clerk understands the subject so well that he does not realize how little the questioner knows. He is likely to spend most of his time on "the company that is perfectly sound and the need that even the best-established firms may have for added capital in extending their business"; perhaps he will just incidentally mention "a promise to pay a certain sum of money at a set time with a guaranteed interest." Only a small part of his oral composition is used for explaining what is not understood. His time should be used for answering those very questions that he ignores and that would lead to an understanding of what a bond is: "What is a promissory note? What is security? What is a capital debt? What is a share in such a debt?"

The boy who wrote his Cuban friend (page 434) an explanation of a snow fort used only a fifth of his space for explaining (and, at that, in vague terms) what a snow storm is; the boy who wrote to Honolulu used nearly all his space for explaining particularly what one snowflake is, what a drift of them is like, what the difference is between hard snow and melting snow, how a snowball grows by rolling. These two examples are typical of poor and good proportion in exposition.

#### F. PROPORTION IN ARGUMENT

After a writer has disposed of any necessary definition and limitation of the question, his argument normally consists of two parts—what he concedes on the other side, what he proves on his own side. An important question of proportion, then, is “How much space shall I use for conceding?” Certainly he cannot, in ordinary cases, allow as much as half of his theme for concession; a third would usually be too much; a fifth would probably be sufficient.

Bad proportioning is sure to result if a writer does not form a preliminary plan of the items of his argument, in order of increasing importance. If he is guided by such a plan, he will compress the slighter matters into smaller compass, reserving most space for the most important reason.

Pages of advice about “proportion in argument” might not produce much result; but the following remark will show any conscientious student the road to proportion: “If a brief is properly drawn, it indicates the relative amount of space or time that each part is to occupy.”

#### G. REALIZE THE BRIEF TIME

It is often easier to attain good proportion in a theme if we remember that a reader moves twenty times as fast as we do: his eye travels in three minutes through what we spend an hour in composing. That whole dragging ten-minute period while a

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writer planned for the next sentence, started to write it, discovered that the previous sentence would not fit, altered that, tried twice for the new sentence—all this time of struggle is no time at all for the reader. His eye moves swiftly along. Hence he seldom needs any helping hand like "as I said before." For us, in the slowness of composing, that statement was made in the distant past; for him, in the speed of reading, it is still before his eyes. He therefore wonders at "as I said before." A speaker must always keep in mind this difference between his long time of preparation and the brief minutes in which a hearer listens; he must realize how the slowly contrived parts of his composition are going to sound to the audience, that in a few minutes judges the proportions of the whole.

### EXERCISES

Criticize the proportions of the following themes. The themes may be faulty in more ways than one and may well be criticized for those other faults, but this exercise is limited to describing the ways in which proportion is good or bad.

#### 1. Speed

In a high school that I once attended there were six fraternities, the most important of which were the X and the Y chapters. Between these two there existed keen rivalry in all affairs. Although a state law forbade the existence of fraternities, they played a large part in the school life. Among the fellows it was considered a great honor to be taken into one of them. I had the good fortune to be an X.

Owing to the wonderful roads we took a great interest in automobiles, and nearly every fellow in our frat and the Y's had a car of his own. We naturally talked about automobiles whenever we got together. Curious as it may sound, the place where we used to discuss this topic most was in the Sunday-school class, which was attended by most of the members of both frats. The teacher, who was a well-known man in the automobile world, talked to us much on the subject. This increased the attendance of the class, but caused some doubt in our parents' minds as to the knowledge of the Bible which we were receiving. Nevertheless, he was a fine man and had a wonderful influence over us.

It so happened that the presidents of the two frats had the fastest cars. The X president had a "Speedster." The Y leader had a "Bear-Cat." Neither of them had been passed by anybody yet, but both of them had made many a car eat their dust. For some reason they had never raced each other, and consequently there was much speculation as to which would win if they ever did meet. Neither one cared to challenge the other to a race, and the only way it would ever happen would be for them to accidentally come upon one another, and this was a thing everyone was waiting for.

The annual Y dance was over, and the guests were returning home. I was in our president's machine, and we, driving slowly, had just reached the foot of Sheboygan Drive when we heard the unmistakable cut-out of the "Bear-Cat." At last that moment which was waited for so long had come. The "Bear-Cat" drew nearer and nearer until it finally was even with us, and then both drivers at exactly the same time "stepped on it."

It is hard to describe the feelings I had when we started on that race. At first when I heard the combined roar of the two motors, I must admit I was afraid, but a new feeling suddenly swept over me, a feeling of exultation and joy over the excitement of the race. No thought was given to the dangers of racing at night. The thing which concerned us was the winning of the race, which we knew would mean so much to us if we won it.

I never saw two cars with such wonderful "pick ups." In the space of two blocks from thirty miles an hour they had increased their speed to sixty. For those two blocks neither of them gained, but soon the "Speedster" began to creep ahead a little. Over railroad tracks, past intersections, we rode without slackening our speed the least bit. Suddenly the "Speedster" seemed to draw away from the "Bear-Cat" as if the latter were standing still. We had surely won, and there was no question about it, but the Y's were unwilling to let such an important thing be settled by one race. The performance was repeated, and we were again victorious. There was no doubt about our supremacy now, but the others decided to make one last desperate try.

This time neither car seemed to gain for about six blocks. Suddenly our president, remembering that there was a curve ahead, shut down, and the Y leader, thinking he was gaining, stepped on the throttle harder. The curve was seen too late; all that could be done was to shut off the power and take a chance. The right-hand rear wheel and mud-guard were snapped off by the car's skidding against a telephone pole. This caused the car to slide for fully three hundred feet, stopping just at the edge of the steep embankment of a ravine.

We drove up to the wrecked car, expecting to find someone seriously hurt, but no one, aside from being badly frightened and somewhat shaken up, was injured.

This narrow escape from death had a great effect on all of us. It was perhaps a good thing that such a thing did happen, because we were shown by the near tragedy the folly of racing. Nevertheless, this did not keep us from feeling somewhat proud over our victory, and we still secretly gloat over it, although I feel sure that we have had all we want of racing.

## 2. A Dreary March

We had been marching for seven days through the deserts and arid land of northern Mexico. The sun was intensely hot, and the sand burned through the shoes of the men as we staggered along. We had had no water but the brackish water of water-holes, and no food but what we carried in our haversacks.

We were the advance guard of Pershing's expeditionary force in México to capture Villa. We consisted of two battalions of the infantry and the whole regiment of the — cavalry. The cavalry kept some distance ahead of us and was split up into flanking patrols, while we in the infantry acted as the advance party for them to fall back on in case they were attacked too heavily. We were about three miles in advance of the main body, and as the provision wagons were some distance behind them, our chief article of food was bacon.

The scenery was much the same all along our march: a little cactus and a lot of sand, and a lot of sand and a little cactus. Occasionally we would come to the valley of a small river with fertile land on each side of it, and sometimes there would be little villages of adobe huts where the population would turn out and welcome us with brickbats and empty beer-bottles. At first we had resented these little signs of friendship, but soon the novelty wore off. It was the same way with the mirages. At first these strange freaks of nature caused much wonder and interest, but with the steady drudgery of the day's march these also somewhat lost their novelty. We prayed for something to happen, but got very little reward for it. We were attacked several times by bands of Mexican bandits, but the cavalry succeeded in beating them off without trouble.

When we finally went into permanent camp and got a chance to wash up, we began to take a greater interest in life. The country here was of a more interesting nature, but as long as I live I never want to see as uninteresting a stretch as that seemed to us as we marched through it with Pershing.



### 3. The Growing of Rubber in the Malay Peninsula

The location of the intended plantation is very important, and many things must be taken into consideration. The land must have the right kind of soil and not be too hilly or swampy. It must have some kind of transportation to send its rubber cheaply to a large city. Then it is of much advantage if it is in a healthful locality, and where labor is plentiful and cheap. When the locality is picked, surveyors cut roads through the jungle, cutting up the land into squares. The soil from each of the squares is then tested, and the nature of the land reported. Next the company picks out the exact boundaries of the plantation. The land is leased for one thousand years, the rent per year increasing for ten years, and then remaining stationary.

Now the land must be cleared. Coolie buildings and the manager's bungalow are erected, coolies are brought, and the clearing of the jungle is begun. Great trees have to be cut down. Next the debris is burned. This process of clearing and burning is the hardest and most unhealthful work of all.

Next the rubber trees have to be planted. All the work is done by coolie labor; tractors are not used. The trees are planted in squares or triangles. The planting is done in one section that has been cleared, while other sections are being cleared and burned. The planting is not all done at once. So many acres are planted this year, so many the next, etc.

It is six years before the trees can be tapped. Meanwhile the land is kept cleared, and new sections are planted. A hospital must be built, for the malaria is bad in Malay.

When the tapping is to be done, sticks are driven into the ground beside each tree, and a glass bowl—something like a finger-bowl, only thicker—is inverted over the stick. Every morning at six o'clock a coolie tapper makes the round of his trees and taps them. He places the bowl on the ground, makes a v-shaped cut in the bark with his tapping-knife, and sticks in a piece of curved tin to let the sap drip into the bowl. The "v" top is only one way; many styles are used. At eleven o'clock he comes around again with two buckets, one full of water. He empties the sap into the empty bucket and washes the bowl in the other. The water in which the bowl is washed in is kept, as much rubber is got from it.

### 4. Resolved: That the Sophomores Should Have Self-Government

Many times I have heard my friends discussing whether the sophomore class should have self-government or not. Of course there are many reasons for and against this issue. The principal has not yet

deemed it wise to give the sophomore class control over itself. There is a chance that in the future he will allow the sophomores to prove themselves by permitting them to try it for a short period of time. Then, if the matter turns out satisfactory, the sophomores may have self-government. As I am going to try to uphold the statement that the sophomore class should have self-government, I will first put down the reasons of the opposite side, as a lawyer friend of my father's says that he is never sure of his case until he has thought of all possible replies.

Many say that this self-government is the mark of distinction of the upper classes. As one goes from class to class in school, if one can see that the boys ahead of him have many more privileges than he, he will undoubtedly work much harder. Therefore they say that the boys of the sophomore class should not have self-government.

There is always the chance that young boys will abuse this privilege. Perhaps they would not pay attention to the orders of their class officers. The latter would hesitate to give their friends demerits perhaps. Maybe the lack of proper discipline would allow the boys to "rough-house" and "play hookey," because they knew that their officers could not catch them. This is another reason why some say that the sophomore class should not have self-government.

But on the other side when a boy goes to choose the class officers, he would pick out the ablest fellows. Then I think that the average boy would stick up for the class officers and pay attention to their orders. Most boys would do this and help to keep the rest in order.

The last and most important point why sophomores should have self-government is that it would give them great training in obeying rules which were made by themselves. When they had left school and college, they would be greatly benefited by the training in governing themselves that they had received in the sophomore class.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### BUILDING PROBLEMS

#### A. THE QUESTION OF TITLES

"The most exciting minute of the summer vacation" might be a general topic assigned for a theme in September. The majority of the class will probably develop this in story form, with a change of situation and an unexpected climax. Some of the anecdotes will be humorous; some will deal with danger. A few members of the class may give pure description, showing how at a certain moment—perhaps on waking from a sound sleep at two o'clock—a certain sight or sound, which would ordinarily have caused no excitement, produced a deep effect on the mind. There will be as many different experiences as there are members in the class. Each one of these deserves a special name. To write "The Most Exciting Minute of the Summer Vacation" across the top of the first page would be like christening a child "Some One Who Goes to the Blank School." The name of a theme is its "title."

Finding a good title is often more important than might be supposed. An interesting title pleases a reader and predisposes him to think well of what follows; it proves in advance that the writer has some force and originality. We all know how much a novel or play or magazine story is helped by an attractive name. A good title for a theme often helps the writer by "sparking up" his mind to a livelier effort and by giving him something definite to aim at. Good taste in choosing titles is somewhat the same as in naming a child: we want something distinctive, but not freakish; interesting, but not sensational. If the most exciting minute of a vacation was "when I held an unopened letter, wondering what my fate was," the possibilities for a title range from "?" to "The Paper Casket." The big interrogation mark is

freakish, though teachers would prefer that originality to such a long and flatly descriptive title as "The Letter That I Did Not Open for a While." The reference to a "casket" may be unfortunate if the reader does not at once think of *The Merchant of Venice*. A title should not describe the contents of the theme; it ought to be a brief name, fitting the subject, merely pointing it out, rousing a reader's curiosity to see what has been written; and it ought to be of such a sort that when a reader has reached the end of the theme, he will feel, "I see now how neatly the name fits the turn of thought." A long title is unlikely to fit neatly. More than six words, unless they are short and compactly phrased, are likely to appear cumbersome. The best training in selecting titles is to have each member of the class suggest one for a certain topic, to write these all on the board, and then to vote on which is best. The ballot will not necessarily show the one that is best, but it will almost surely indicate the difference between good and poor. In the case of the unopened letter a class would feel that "Wow!" is vague and disagreeable, that "Holding Uncle's Letter" is insipid, that "He Who Hesitates Is Lost" is a trite maxim that does not fit the subject. "The Preposterous Postscript" would be a good choice only if a writer wanted disagreeable sounds at the head of his theme. "The Sprinkler Letter" would answer only if a writer wished to excite curiosity and did not wish to give any hint of the nature of his subject. "Fate Hid in an Auger Hole" might be appreciated by a class that recognized the *Macbeth* allusion, but certainly not by any other class. It is generally true that a title ought not to tell the secret that is to be divulged in the climax; so "The Joyous News" or "Worst Fears Confirmed" would be poor titles. None of these objections can be made to the following:

What Was Inside?  
Fate in an Envelope  
Afraid to Look  
Sixty Seconds of Suspense  
"Why Don't You Open It?"

Titles for stories may be chosen by fancy or caprice, and still be in good taste. For descriptions we expect something more matter-of-fact, though we usually prefer to see a writer avoid a mere flat statement of the subject like "San Diego Bay" or "A Crowded Jitney." In general it is best not to use the general topic as a name, but to find a title that fits our own particular handling of the topic. So in the case of expositions we prefer that a topic—like "The nature of artesian wells"—should not be made to serve as a title; for it is vague and unpromising; we suspect that there is nothing interesting in the theme. If we see "How Water Pumps Itself" or "Why the Water Spouts," we know at the outset that the writer takes an interest in his subject and will probably interest us. The same principle applies to arguments. Though we may not object to the question for a title, we are not attracted by "Resolved: That a Seven-Cent Fare is Just"; we are more pleasantly affected by "A Nickel Is Not Enough." A talented writer instinctively posts something attractive at the entrance to his theme; we do well to imitate him and to stretch all the talent we have to justify the title.

It is a standing rule (though perhaps a doubtful one) that "the title ought not to be assumed in the first sentence"—that is, that a pronoun in the first sentence ought not to refer to the title. If the title is "Where Are We Going?" the first sentence must not say, "This is a hard question," but must repeat: "Where we are going is hard to say."

#### B. HOW TO BEGIN

There was a time when authors felt the need of making a leisurely approach to a subject; it was customary to write an "introductory" passage. There still is, and always will be, a need for introducing whatever is unexpected or is foreign to a reader's habit of thought. There may sometimes be need of an introduction to remove prejudice or to explain a point of view that the reader might misjudge. In every case where a writer feels at the outset that there is a gulf between himself and

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his reader he will build a bridge of introduction, show the way across it, and say, "Now you can see what I am about."

There is seldom need of a bridge to the subjects treated in our compositions. High-school introductions seldom introduce. They do not bridge a gap, but simply erect a barrier, require us to walk around it, and lead us to the original point for a fresh start. The ordinary high-school introduction is a pretense, without any function to perform. In oral themes it is almost sure to be a waste of time. It is often a pile of words raised by a student who does not know how else to begin. Sometimes it is nothing more than a lazy failure to notice what the topic is. It may be just a preliminary ceremony, performed without any rational purpose. Students have been known to commence too abruptly, but a hundred times more common is the fault of beginning far away from the subject and setting down an opening paragraph that accomplishes nothing.

The safe rule is never to think of the first paragraph as an introduction. It is to be regarded as the first part of a whole. A story ought not to be "introduced"; it should begin with the purpose of displaying promptly to a reader the people in a situation. Examples of "introductions" have been given previously. (See pages 33, 71.) A description of a procession or a fire should not (except for some special reason) begin with "as I was reading the newspaper the night before." Exposition will ordinarily be more clear and argument more persuasive if a writer makes a prompt and business-like attack.

A good illustration of a common type of beginning at a distance from the topic is these opening paragraphs of a 450-word theme on "The Holy Rollers."

A few years ago I had occasion to make a three-weeks stay at a little town on the coast of southern Georgia. Like many another Georgia seaside town, Bannbrae consisted of a waterfront, three ramshackle piers, about nine unpainted houses, and plenty of sand. It was essentially a fishing town, and every morning early one could hear the chug—chug—bang—chug of countless motor-boats heading out the inlet in pursuit of the daily catch.

The population was made up of about three hundred colored people and thirty whites. The colored people are very superstitious and exceedingly religious. They are divided into many different sects of varying degrees of fanaticism. It is about one of these sects, the "Holy Rollers," that I wish to write.

That is by no means a horrible example. The details are given attractively, and we are somewhat interested in them. The objection to them is that they do not introduce the subject, since the three piers and the motor-boats and the thirty whites have no effect on "superstitions." The fact that these objects may be seen in Bannbrae, that the picture of them comes into the writer's mind when he thinks of "Holy Rollers," is no excuse for misleading our minds. A real theme is not a catch-all for the memories that are strewn about in the writer's mind, but is a selection of one memory that is presented as one subject. Throughout the rest of his description the writer was highly entertaining, furnishing matter of this sort:

And then, with one accord, they all got down and began to roll—fat old women doing their best to roll, but not even being able to turn over; old men helping each other along; and young men rolling like mad. Out of this sea of screaming, writhing idiots stuck hundreds of waving arms and legs, striving to help their owners to "tu'n ovah, tu'n ovah fo'de Lawd!"

The talent that can put such material on paper ought not to have prefaced its description with sand and chugging motors.

The first paragraph of a description is the place where we are most likely to find material that does not help toward the principal effect. This is also true of exposition. If some machine or some process is to be explained, a reader prefers to enter promptly upon something significant or novel. If a class hears a number of talks on "how to make something," they are not entertained by a first minute that tells of the obvious "assembling of materials." Of course there must be nails for attaching boards to studding, and probably they were bought at a hardware store. What of it? An audience wants to hear of those matters that were somewhat out of the ordinary, that made this operation

somewhat different from all other operations of the same kind. It wants a speaker to begin without a routine of humdrum "introduction." If we are to hear of a horseback ride, we prefer immediate action, like this:

I dug my spurs sharply into the flanks of my little bronco, for I was in a hurry to reach Juarez before night.

A reader does not enjoy being plunged far back into history as an entrance upon a modern topic, yet many theme-writers seem to feel compelled to attach themselves to ancient times, by a meaningless reference. The following introductory sentence is a mere flourish of ignorance:

Lecturers, probably, date back a great many years, but it was not until recently that they started to speak in the high schools.

When a good lecturer speaks to a crowd of students—etc.

A reader does not enjoy such painful parading of obvious purposes as the following:

In choosing a writer whose works are suitable for reading in a large or a small school I am going according to my own judgment and will endeavor to do my best. Nathaniel Hawthorne, maybe the greatest American writer, is my choice. There are many reasons why I believe Hawthorne best adapted for school reading, but I will only take three important ones—namely: his style of writing, the intellectual effect it may have on the younger mind, and then I shall try to analyze one of his best works.

We take it for granted that a girl ought to "go according to her own judgment," that she will "endeavor to do her best," that there are "many reasons" for the choice, that she can explain "only the important ones" in a brief theme; we do not care to have these displayed in advance, but should like to hear at first about Hawthorne's style.

The two following openings show real purpose in a first paragraph. They accomplish something by briefly setting before us peculiar circumstances.

1. My brother had for some time wanted to have a summer camp to which he might take his wife, two children, and myself. As his



funds were somewhat limited, he had to resort to unusually strict economy. He had as yet made no definite plans, when there was a wreck on the railroad which ran but a few hundred yards away from the lot which he had purchased beside a pretty little lake. There was one rather old baggage-car and smoker combined which was pretty well smashed. The railroad men decided to burn the car up.

It was then that my brother had a brilliant idea—etc.

2. The most characteristic feature of the village inn was the conversation that developed there during a normal gathering of the villagers. Upon this particular day the talk had turned upon the subject of cows.

The butcher having annoyed the easily excited farrier, this latter personage challenged the butcher—etc.

Even when a writer feels that there is good reason for an "introductory paragraph," he should hesitate, remembering three facts: (1) Since a preliminary flourish is often the sign of weakness in themes, his effort may be misinterpreted; he is running a risk. (2) Professional writers testify that an introduction which costs much labor and worry, and which is supposed to be essential, may very likely prove to be a rubbish heap before the door—something to be shoveled out of the way in revision. (3) Professional writers testify that they are more likely to waste time in beginning than at any other point. Certainly students are prone to waste much time in casting about for "some way to begin." The squandered effort is usually caused by an undefined feeling that there is some need of an "introduction." In all likelihood there is no such need.

### C. DRAWING UP A PLAN FOR THE THEME

A carpenter or a mason must work according to specific plans; it is therefore natural to infer that the builder of a theme ought to draw up a detailed plan of operations before he begins to write (as shown in Chapters III-VI). Most rhetorics insist upon the necessity of making a preliminary outline; teachers recommend, and sometimes require, that a full scheme of paragraphs shall be prepared in advance. We know that professionals have made written plans for an essay or a chapter.

But we also know that some editors and story-writers have gone about their work without any written plan, and that some successful amateurs have built their best compositions without the guidance of any preliminary outline. They cannot tell us—they do not themselves know—how their minds are directed in selecting materials and shaping the whole structure. They may set down some memoranda for an exposition that turns out poorly, or they may dash without preparation into another exposition that is highly successful. "What sort of framework of operations was in your mind?" we ask them. They can give no reply. For aught they can tell us they are as unsystematic as one of those mathematical prodigies who add and multiply large numbers by merely looking at them for a few seconds. The prodigy has a peculiar power, of which he can give no account, by which he can calculate a hundred times as rapidly as a systematic professor of mathematics.

Shall we, then, decide that drawing up a plan is unnecessary and that we may choose the happy-go-lucky way of plunging in and trusting to luck? Before anyone does so, he should carry one step farther this comparison with the lightning calculator. The calculator is an intellectual freak; he has this gift, but no others; outside of his multiplying operations he may be practically an idiot; he could not teach the multiplication table; he cannot tell book-keepers or astronomers how to handle figures; he is of no use to all the practical people who have to do the world's calculating. Hence a sixth-grade pupil who tried to emulate him would not learn even a slow method of figuring. The ordinary pupil must study the ordinary methods if he is to get an education.

So the average theme-writer will gain nothing by trusting to luck. For of course genius does not operate by chance. Every successful theme-writer's mind works according to some exact and severe principles, for the composition that it produces has a plan within it. That is the hard fact that we should all like to shy away from, but that cannot be evaded. In every good theme

there is a plan. The writer may not have put it on paper, may not have known that it existed, may even deny that he ever thought of any plan. Yet there it is. A plan does not result by chance. It can only result from the operations of a brain—whether or not the brain realizes what it has done. A textbook cannot tell any one student the best way to secure a plan; it can assure every student that a theme without a plan is like a person without a backbone.

Some practical hints can be given, which are based on observations of students and on testimony that they have given.

**1. Story.** A formal, written plan for a story is unusual, because the main outline is simple and unchangeable, while the details may vary most unexpectedly. Thackeray once said that his characters “got away from him”; his sensation was of watching the people in his story, who became so real to him that they did what he had not planned for. Amateurs often see, as a plot develops, that characters might act in ways that were not foreseen when the writer was less acquainted with them. In details the plan may vary a great deal. Yet the main structure is seldom much altered. Skilful story-tellers usually have the general plan firmly in mind and adhere to it faithfully.

**2. Description.** Having the plan “in mind” accounts for most of the success of speakers or writers who may suppose that they need no preliminary outline as a guide. A scheme of operations is laid instinctively. For a description the process may be something of this sort: “Let’s see. I stood in such a spot at such a time. Things looked like this—and this—and the other. Yes, I see the big features. There was that other feature, and another, and some others; but they don’t count, because they would be in any similar scene. I remember what struck me most—that seemed to be the center of things. I can build around that. I can’t put everything higgledy-piggledy before the class in three minutes; I must tell them the central sensation, give them some items from the foreground, through the thick of it, and on to the background—and there she was—the old woman who yelled out

of the window. She had the spirit of the crowd, and she hit off the whole thing when she sang out to the policeman. I'll end with her." A person planning for a written theme might sit at his desk and have a train of ideas twice that long before he had pulled out a pad and unscrewed the cap of his pen. He might begin to write immediately, and next day might affirm that he never had used an outline in his life. The fact is that his success is based on the making of a full outline and following it faithfully, though the whole process is mental and very rapid, though the writer is not conscious of having made a plan.

**3. Exposition.** An exposition is less likely to be planned so inspirationally. Even the practiced writer is conscious of more definite requirements and limitations, which must be plotted if the parts are to fit together well. He must decide upon the order of the steps in his explanations, some natural sequence of events or places or processes. A definite preliminary plan is more obviously needed and more usually drawn up by a conscious effort.

**4. Argument.** For an argument some plan is even more obviously required: "what does the question mean? how do opponents twist the meaning? what is the big argument against me? what is the fallacy in this? what is the big reason that convinces me? how shall I lead up, through the minor reasons in a natural sequence, to a strong, final plea?"

**5. Simplicity of outlines.** The plans that have been hinted at in the last four paragraphs are brief and simple. So far as we can gather evidence of the way in which successful writers make a preliminary outline, we judge that practical plans are simple. We may, to be sure, analyze a thousand-word article and find that its structure can be diagramed elaborately, like the outline on page 100. A hundred-word paragraph, for that matter, could be diagramed just as elaborately if we followed out the ramifications of thought into each clause and phrase. (See "dragged down by a whale," pages 48-49.) But human writers never make any such minute chart in preparation for the writing of a hundred words. Nor do they, so far as we know, foresee

and plot the "a, b, c" of the "1" of their "III." This is an anatomical study of an organism that grew by another kind of plan.

Students are often frightened by the idea of "drawing up a plan," not realizing how plain and brief a good plan may be. A little arithmetic would allay their fears; and to some it will reveal a most useful idea. If the average paragraph is seventy-five words long (disregarding quotations in dialogue), and if a 400-word theme is to be planned, there are perhaps only five paragraphs to be reckoned with, possibly not more than four. If each paragraph must be about one topic, the outline will be a sufficient guide if it provides a list of five topics. The chief problems of structure are all accounted for in a simple list of five brief titles for paragraphs. For a thousand-word exposition or argument it may be well to think of three main divisions and to plan for two or three or four paragraphs in each; yet this is no more than a way of arranging three groups of paragraphs. The paragraph may be the unit for all outlines of high-school composition.

**6. Outlines may be altered.** When a plan has been decided upon—whether in the mind or upon paper—it is not a fixed specification of what we must necessarily do. We are not under obligation to adhere to it if in the course of writing some variation suggests itself. It is not set up to prevent our will from acting; it is only a safeguard against disorderly writing. It may be freely altered if it is our own guide for our own work. But if a subject is discussed in class, an outline developed there, and instructions given by the teacher to follow that prescribed outline, the case is entirely different. That is an exercise in following someone else's plan. Even so, teachers are usually glad to have any student alter the outline to suit his own invention, if he specifies his purpose in making the alteration.

**7. The plan made a part of the theme.** We have thus far used the metaphor of "architect's plan" in speaking of outlines. Sometimes an outline is used as a kind of staging to work on. A common device for securing an orderly exposition is to set up the

plan within the theme itself, announcing in the first paragraph that four parts of the topic will be treated in one, two, three, four order. This may be useful for oral work, because it shows the structure at once, insures the audience against going astray, and is evidence that there has been real planning. But it is by no means an ideal method. Such an obtrusive presentation of a plan may seem like the workmen's staging left upon a completed building—an unsightly evidence of how the work was done. If possible, it is better to have the plan on a card of notes, to follow it, but not to spread it out in so many words before an audience or a reader.

#### D. PLANNING THE PARAGRAPH

What has been said about planning for the entire theme applies in the main to planning for a paragraph. In theory we should expect an author to know in advance what the course of his thought is to be through the series of sentences, to map that course in his mind before he writes the first sentence. We can guess that to a considerable extent authors do this in practice. But we also know that many professional writers set out into a paragraph without any prearranged sequence of thoughts. They have an objective in mind, and they advance toward it, feeling their way from one sentence to the next. Keeping steadily on in one line of thought produces their orderly structure. When the paragraph is finished, it may be analyzed and found to conform to a plan. That is the important matter. Methods of building a paragraph in conformity to some plan may be as various as the individuals who write, but the plan—however or whenever it is formed—exists.

#### E. PREVISION AND REVISION

An old, old maxim is "Write with fury and correct with phlegm." This advice is generally interpreted and recommended to students thus: "When you write the first draft of your composition, keep your attention principally on the arrange-

ment of material, on the larger effects; don't let the mind be distracted by too much thought of sentence-structure and choice of words; do one thing at a time. Write along rapidly, with 'furious' speed, if the ideas are flowing. Then correct slowly and methodically, 'with phlegm'—seeing that sentences are varied, correcting mistakes of syntax, inserting further marks of punctuation, substituting for repeated words, and improving the choice of words. Make a clean copy of this revision."

How helpful the advice is must be found out by each student for himself. If he has formed a habit of "writing with phlegm," he should not rashly try to learn to write with fury. Some able writers cannot rush along, leaving a clutter behind them, but must feel that each sentence is orderly before they go on to the next one. Though we know of one novelist who dictated his books to a stenographer, making a first draft at great speed and slowly revising with his pen, we know, on the other hand, that some of the great scenes in Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot came from the author's pens as a first draft, and were sent to the printers without any revision. We know that some students who carefully prepare a second draft have poor themes; we know that some school writers who do not condescend to a second draft present clean, orderly themes full of interest. Every writer must develop his own way of securing the results.

The student should think of the two sides of the question thus: (1) The authors who compose passages of literature without revision are geniuses, have had a long training, and have vividly in mind what they wish to say. So an editor who dashes off a column of brilliant argument that can be published without revision may have been revolving the subject in his mind for weeks; he is not really composing new material. But when an editor or an author attempts a new subject, he may have to erase and alter and prepare a second draft; we know, for example, that Stevenson and George Eliot struggled and revised when beginning a book. Since a theme-writer is attacking a subject that is new to him, he ought not to expect to glide easily

along through an errorless first draft; if he is trying to do his best, the chances are that he ought to make numerous changes and prepare a second draft. He should not be misled by the ease with which some gifted classmate produces a clean and well-planned series of paragraphs in a first draft. For that result is not achieved without revision. The fact is that the gifted classmate has revised in his mind—that is, he has thought of a plan and altered it, devised a paragraph and changed it to a different one, planned sentences and recast them entirely *in his mind*. These are strong reasons why the average student should expect to revise a first draft and prepare a second draft. (2) But, on the other hand, he should always be training himself to do more revision in his mind before putting sentences on paper. Certainly he ought not to allow himself to write words in such a way that he must revise his spelling, for that is a kind of laxness that would destroy his knowledge of spelling. School and college authorities expect punctuation to become habitual, so that the marks can be inserted in the first draft naturally and easily. Sentences should be foreseen in the mind, “said aloud in the brain,” and revised before they are put on paper. Two minutes spent in planning a paragraph may save twenty minutes of rewriting. What is more, the result may be better, because the hasty, malformed structure that we scribble down in a rush may confuse the mind. Mental revision is always preferable; the power to revise before writing should be cultivated. In real life most men and women have no chance to prepare a second draft of their letters. This fact is recognized by some state courses of study, which announce that the requirement is “ability to compose in the first draft.” These are strong reasons why every student should so far as possible train himself to revise before he writes. This busy twentieth century does not provide us with seclusion and unlimited leisure for writing our letters and taking our civil-service examinations, but requires us to assemble our thoughts, to plan the arrangement of them, and to provide sentence variety, before we commit them to paper.



## F. THE CONCLUSION

1. Not a "summary." Just as there is seldom a real need for an introduction, so there is seldom a need for a "summary" of an ordinary theme. The items described or the reasons given are in such brief space that, if they have been well presented, they are fresh in a reader's mind at the close. Of course there are exceptions, especially in an argument; but when in doubt, don't "summarize." The following are typical examples of weak little efforts to make conclusions.

Thus, in bringing to a conclusion this treatise on summer work, I find that in summing up the situation summer work is a basis upon which our great Americanism is founded.

From the above reasons it is easy to be seen that you should plan your course carefully.

These, then, are the things which keep me very busy in summer.

Summing the whole thing up, I think that an honor system is a very good system for the ordinary school.

In the above paragraphs I have tried to tell you about the training that a man must undergo to be an officer.

Any conclusion is poor if it gives the effect of "Thus what I have said is what I have said."

2. Some conclusion needed. Yet even a repetitious and petty "summary" is better than no conclusion at all. The following last sentences of themes sound as if the speakers had suddenly found that time was up.

Our town has also given the soldiers from a near-by camp some very good times by giving dances and parties for a certain number of them each week or so.

I fear that the whole family rather spoils the youngest, a little girl of four years, who is her father's comfort and playmate, her mother's little helper, big sister's admirer, and brother's playfellow. The cook, who has been with them sixteen years is just one of the family.

A "mere stop" is a serious fault; a summary is tiresome and artificial. How should a good conclusion be made? We can learn the knack by noticing how successful classmates manage.

The following are two illustrations—not brilliant or beautiful, not beyond the average student's ability—of good ways to close. The first composition had been describing “a monotonous train-ride.”

If I ever take that trip again, I shall travel by night.

The following conclusion of “Our Wireless Station” sounds as if we had reached the end of a successful experiment.

After a few minutes had elapsed, my chum began to show increasing excitement. Soon he handed the phone to me, yelling, “It works!”

**3. Not new material.** The last words of a theme (as we saw on page 47 and elsewhere) should refer to what has been said; they should not deny what has been said, nor take another direction, nor introduce us to a new scene. Obvious as that statement is, teachers have to repeat it, just as this book does. A heedless student seems led by some mysterious force to close a theme about “A Day in the Desert” thus:

The next day found us in quite another atmosphere, and all the passengers were much relieved.

After he has given the description of a park, has reached a real ending, he appends the fatal postscript:

As I got up, I thought of how many similar parks we have in our beloved country.

One skilful theme-writer, who was seldom heedless, closed a theme on “Effective Advertisements” by saying:

So by giving you these examples and showing you the impressions which they make I hope I have convinced you that to have a successful magazine you must have good advertisements.

He shoots away from his topic to a different topic—namely, “Successful Magazines.” Compared with that fault the next writer's error is slight, but it is an error. The reader of “My Own Idea” ought not at the very last word to be sent to “somebody else's idea.”

Everybody has his own idea of a summer camp, and what suits one person will not suit another. Everybody should plan his own,

and he will get much more satisfaction out of it than if he copies another's.

After an exposition of "Good Signs" the writer ought not to close with "poor signs."

Therefore, by my three illustrations I have shown that my idea of a good sign is a short and simple one; that the long and complicated ones are usually not the best.

4. **Of a story.** A poor conclusion is more damaging to a story than to the other forms of composition. The writer will spoil the whole effect if he rambles on into a supplementary "concluding" paragraph after his climax. The following illustration is the last two paragraphs of an anecdote about an alarming noise on the roof; the reader has been kept in suspense, supposes that it is dangerous to mount the roof, and is admiring the heroine's daring as she climbs the ladder from the attic to investigate.

"Come right up, Madam, and see the fine things we've been doing to the roof. You are just in time to see the last patch put in place. Do let me help you up."

It all flashed over me then, and I remembered that the man had been ordered to repair the roof, and then paint it all a crimson red. Not wanting to disclose our foolish mistake, however, we went up to the roof and were just in time to see the last patch put in place, and the hammer that had brought about such excitement put safely back into its pocket in the kit.

The story was complete long before the hammer was put into the kit.

5. **"The end of something worth while."** Devices for closing a theme are of infinite variety. Kipling once chose to conclude with "That is another story," humorously violating the fundamental rule of climax. A spirited argumentative theme was once closed with "Wake up and think for yourself," thus seeming to throw aside a writer's responsibility for persuading a reader; yet it was a good conclusion, because the whole emphasis of the composition had been on the peril of letting others think for us. A conclusion should always "emphasize what has gone before, and sound like the end of something that is worth while."

**EXERCISES**

Criticize the following beginnings and endings of themes. Some are excellent, some are just tolerable, and some are very poor. Do not spend time with any errors in the use of words, but comment on the general effectiveness.

**A. Beginnings**

1. [Two hundred words describing a factory town.] It was a day in the middle of July. The weather was hot and sultry. When we reached the top of the hill, we decided to stop and rest for a few minutes. From its summit we found we commanded a view of many miles. In one direction, at some distance, could be seen a factory town.

2. Steel is a conversion product of crude iron, which is produced in a blast-furnace by the smelting of iron ores.

Iron ore occurs as an oxide of iron, associated—etc.

3. When our school opened last September, our principal made us see that we should have to give up quite a little comfort and pleasure in order to help the people suffering in Europe.

4. In glancing over the various means of education I think we shall all agree that lectures afford one of the most influential and valuable methods.

5. During the course of the year almost all of us have given some thought as to what we would do in the summer. Most of us have probably not given enough thought to this matter, however; and now, as only a few days separate us from vacation, we find ourselves face to face with the problem.

6. My brother and I were beginning to think that we would not have an exciting adventure. However, this was not to be the case. For we noticed that it was exceptionally hot on the morning of the twentieth day of the trip. We thought that a thunder-storm—etc.

7. Napoleon once said that an army travels on its stomach. Now, in this great war, we can rightly state that an army fights on its morale. It is just this morale which the German armies have not got, but which our armies possess and must keep.

**B. Conclusions**

1. So my school has been affected in many ways and for the good of the school. All schools will not show the same changes, but all will show the three great effects mentioned above.

2. At last I was awakened from my contemplations by the shadow

which had been creeping up the side of the mountain and which had now wrapped me in its folds, and without again looking at the scene before me I resumed my way homeward.

3. Each boy has his own locker and keeps the key with him while in the water. On the other side of the pool are the shower baths, which are constantly in use in the afternoon.

4. I think if one reads the above paragraphs carefully, he will get some idea of what the training of a citizen officer amounts to.

5. [The topic was "a desert scene."] Once in a while a dry, hot breeze passes over the desert, ruffling the surface of the sand, and deceiving the thirsty cacti with the hope of rain.

6. Just as he reached the parapet, Walter saw his captain lying wounded about twenty yards away. So he turned and ran back in the face of the fire and dragged his captain to safety. As he stood on the edge of the trench, while passing his superior's body to the men below, a German bullet found its mark in his back. It isn't always a disgrace to be shot in the back.

7. [The topic was "a town from a distance."] Here and there, and at various intervals, a sheet of flame could be perceived which showed us that the powerful blast furnaces were doing their duty, and at the particular moment were, with their doors open, receiving coal. The flame would flare up, die down, and then disappear.

8. [The topic was "the need of farm work."] Therefore when we are considering what we shall do this summer, let us, if we belong to that great army of stay-at-homes, decide that our duty is to help feed our allies, and with our hoes set out for the farm.

9. There is a cabin and a yard enclosed by a fence for the pigs. Everything seems absolutely dead.

10. [Ending of a letter.] I could go on at length, showing how my new motto holds out, but if I wish it to continue, I must stop, for there is just time for me to get this into the mail.

11. For these reasons I maintain that a daylight-saving law is desirable.

12. [The topic was "a bad habit that I thought I had overcome."] "Where are your leggings?" asked a sergeant.

And I answered glibly, "I got permission to wear THESE kind."

13. At first the automobile appeared hopelessly complicated, and it seemed as if there was no end to the oil-and-grease-cups, but after a while it looked simpler, and the number of cups seemed to diminish. It is very interesting to study out the mechanism of an automobile, and it is quite nice to know all about it. The differential puzzled me at first. The ignition system is still a little puzzling to me.

## CHAPTER XXV

### SINCERITY

#### A. AVOID PRETENTIOUS WORDS

Why is the following paragraph (telling about a twelve-year-old boy) unpleasant?

These bushes bore a white berry, which is not without its attraction for the palate. I made my way to them, where a healthy appetite, I am afraid, led me to gluttonous excess in devouring the fruit. It was due, doubtless, to this gormandizing, coupled with the long walk I had taken, that an extreme drowsiness came over me. I stretched out on the ground and dozed off into a heavy slumber.

If the writer were a friend of yours, if he had heard that someone laughed at his writing, and if he had asked you for criticism, you would find the explanation difficult to give. No one expression is wrong in itself: berries do have "an attraction for the palate"; the writer may really have "devoured" them with "gluttonous excess," may have been overtaken with an "extreme drowsiness" and dozed off into a "heavy slumber." Readers would not smile at these same phrases when used separately in other surroundings. They are amused by the series of high-sounding words to describe the over-eating of a child. The writer has not been true to his subject or to himself, has not been sincere with his reader. He has been striving for dignity and elegance, and has created nothing but humbug. The same falsity appears in this description of a moonlight night:

Now it chanced one extraordinary night, when the moonlight possessed a singularly bright radiance, so strong and illuminating that one might with little difficulty have read the printed page of a book, that I found myself sauntering among the pines in the direction of the old settlement. The air was laden with a property it has only at such times, an indescribable essence, of which one partakes in an ecstasy of quiet

happiness. My fancy led me to believe I could discern the graceful lines of the vanished mansion sparkling in the pure moonbeams.

Such passages of wordy insincerity are not common in high-school writing of the twentieth century, and are even less common in speaking. Not much space in a modern textbook need be devoted to that kind of strained sentimentality in writing stories or descriptions. But there is often a tendency to struggle falsely for effect when declaiming about a moral issue in editorial writing or in debating.

If ignorance reigns in place of knowledge, if sloth is supplanted for activity, and the individual refuses to surrender some few personal pleasures which should be sacrificed to the common good, all too soon will a hurricane of misery whirl those luckless people into a sea whose billows are crushing troubles.

Though it is a virtue to try to use a large vocabulary, the total effect of those sentences is to make us feel that the writer was hoping to overwhelm us with words. Instead of honestly trying to put ideas before us he insincerely piles up words. All the rhetorical gifts in the world come to naught—even in poetry or impassioned oratory—unless the whole composition impresses a reader as sincere.

The following descriptive passage from a student's story may not be elegant or artistic, but it rings true. We feel that the writer put himself in the place of the timorous hero who is locked out of a lighthouse and is standing at the top of it looking down the long ladder to the breakers.

The wind shrieked around the tower and tugged hard to loosen his hold on the rail; he could never hold on, and, baby that he was, he began to cry; he began to think of home. How would his parents take the news that he had been blown off the lighthouse? What would Judith think if she could see him crying like a baby? Like a baby! And he twenty-one! Oh, why hadn't he been given some spirit to do something? If he could only summon up courage, he could climb through the trap door and down the outside ladder to the rocks. He opened the door and looked down. How far it seemed to the angry breakers just rearing their heads to the stone foundation of the tower, and how frail the steel ladder looked!

People who are in peril or agony don't pile up terrifying adjectives or build sentences of resounding woe. They think of simple things and speak in simple language. We learn in war that when men are struggling with death their thoughts often take a homely or humorous twist. In the next passage we see how a student had caught that idea and used it for a life-and-death chase in northern Canada.

So we kept going, the brothers encouraging each other and staggering like blind men. About the middle of the afternoon both brothers fell, and I had to help them up. . . . It was just as we topped a little rise that I first caught sight of Carlton, the man we were following. I yelled the news to the brothers, and we tried to hurry, but couldn't go faster. It would have looked funny to someone in the air to have seen one black speck in advance with three following, all falling, getting up, staggering on like young blind kittens.

A man who told of burying the friend that he had killed would not speak in an exalted style, but in some such terms as those chosen in the following paragraph of school fiction:

So I lifted him up and carried him out into the green woods, a hundred yards from the cabin. There I dug his grave under a pine—a great, green pine. There he sleeps with a smile on his face, while the winds sing through the big tree. It was the best I could do for the one whom I loved—yet killed.

An effect of insincerity is sometimes produced by a descriptive passage, especially an "introductory" paragraph, which looks like an ornamental dab.

The setting sun shone its last dying rays on the little village of Meredith, New Hampshire; the purpling hills sent their broad shadows over the valley, in which nestled this industrious little town, whose products of agriculture were well-known through the neighboring states.

If the reader could believe that the "dying rays" or the "purpling hills" or the "products of agriculture" helped in any way to give a setting for the action, he might like them; but the combination suggests a bit of pretense.

The most usual form of insincerity in themes is the occasional use of stilted or over-emphatic expressions borrowed from litera-



ture and applied in ways that do not help the writer's real feelings:

The pine trees bowed their graceful trunks.

The stillness allowed weird suspicions access to my mind.

No sooner had the thought arisen to her mind than she hastened to order some ice-cream.

The muscles in his face were drawn together, giving him a weird, insane countenance.

Absolutely crazed with grief, they swore eternal vengeance.

A quivering form lay sobbing at the roots of a sighing oak.

The fault is worse and deeper than sentimentalizing or exaggerating or being clumsy. The real offense is that these writers have not been thinking of "what I see and hear"; they have not been true to their own thoughts, but have insincerely set down some remembered words that were once used by somebody for something or other. That curious formality, "for such was his name," is typical of phrases that do not sound genuine in modern themes.

All use of trite expressions is untruthfulness of the same sort. It is difficult to be sincere in the use of any phrases like the following: "in our midst," "mystic glades," "stately mansion," "feverish haste," "cry of horror," "smiled grimly."

If we are trying to be specially impressive in an oral debate, we shall not succeed by saying, "Shall we endure this? No!!" People who are really moved and who are honestly trying to influence others do not thunder forth that kind of query and answer. A school editor who is exhorting students may sound insincere if he trusts to the stilted "so let us."

Any kind of rhetorical straining for effect is likely to cause blunders in the use of words. A writer who feels that he must stretch above the commonplace *boys*, and so uses "masculines," taints his whole composition with insincerity.

#### B. PRETENDING NOT TO KNOW WORDS

Thus far we have emphasized the danger of using pretentious language. The opposite danger needs even more emphasis.

Whereas only a small percentage of American students write affectedly, a majority are afraid to use their full vocabulary. Instead of being ambitious with words, they are diffident, backward, preferring to rely on the scanty stock of phrases that are customary in their conversation. In oral composition they are still more unwilling to use the words they know. This bashfulness is a remarkable feature of American schools. In one way it may be called a virtue, for it is a form of honesty, showing a dislike of any effort that might be judged artificial. Teachers often discover that a student, through fear of being considered a "would-be high-brow," has deliberately avoided an exact word of four syllables and has used a vague monosyllable. Such a student might be harmed by the first part of this chapter; his fear and diffidence might be increased.

He should realize that thus far the chapter has not been addressed to him. It was written for a minority of students whose fault is the opposite of his, and who need the warning. His unwillingness to try to use his full vocabulary, and to increase it week by week, is a worse fault than to make occasional slips by such an effort. His distrust of better diction is in reality a worse form of insincerity than an occasional strain for effect. He fails to improve his style and misrepresents himself to his readers. He is like a man who pretends to take pride in ignorance and bad manners. His thoughts really are varied; his powers of expression are worth exercising. If he will not make an effort to use more and better words, to vary his sentences, to illustrate and ornament his thoughts occasionally, he is artificial, insincere. He misrepresents himself.

### C. "TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE"

The quality that the world cares most about in writing is genuineness. We enjoy the utmost flight of fancy in poetry or the plainest statement in an advertisement if we feel that the writer has expressed himself directly to us. If he has pretended with his words, or pretended that he has no words, we think

poorly of him. A common expression of disapproval of a speaker is, "He sounded artificial"; no words of approval are spoken with heartier emphasis than "it sounds genuine." The most staid readers of formal examinations—say for West Point or for civil service positions—are pleased by a paragraph which represents the writer, which is neither pretentious nor barren. Why do we dislike one advertisement and enjoy another? Because one is a blaring statement or a dead sentence; the other presents to us a human being and speaks to us in the confidence that we too are human. Any student who wants to make a good impression on a stranger by writing a letter must think of himself as a person addressing another person. Whoever reads the letter is some human being; he hates pretense; he is bored by a flat impersonality; he is pleased with whatever is frank and sincerely expresses a touch of the writer's self. One touch of sensible sincerity may be worth a whole page of pleading that is vague and impersonal.

It is easy for some young people to go too far with the idea of "expressing your individuality." No stranger will enjoy presumption or breeziness, nor will he be pleased with a writer who considers himself a very entertaining person. He will not care for sincerity unless it is guided by modesty and common-sense.

A writer who knows how to be direct and sincere succeeds by instinctively observing certain principles.

1. If he is free to choose his own subject, he selects something that he knows about by personal experience and that he has an interest in. If a topic is assigned to him, he tries to get a personal interest in it before he plans a theme. Instead of fighting against the topic he tries to get on familiar terms with it and to make it his own.

2. If he uses other people's ideas, he gives credit. If he borrows a plot, he says so. If he quotes a sentence from a book, he puts quotation marks around it.

3. So far as possible he puts his ideas into a concrete form. Instead of borrowing phrases that mean nothing to him he tries

to get hold of meanings and to express these in his own words. He sometimes uses a bit of dialogue to make a passage more life-like. He may draw diagrams. He thinks of illustrations that convey ideas quickly and easily.

4. Within the limits of good taste, and of a proper respect for his subject and his reader, he tries always to be entertaining. "A little life if I can" is his motto.

5. He always keeps his reader in mind. If a conservative uncle or a grandmother does not like the word "pep," he finds a substitute. He considers what the reader wants to know. If his own mind has gone roaming to a distant part of the topic, he takes notice of that fact and drives his mind through the sequence that will be clear to a reader's mind.

"Self-expression" is not a rhetorical fancy, but a commonplace in the modern world of affairs. The power of putting one's personality on paper is worth money, brings commercial success. Business houses organize classes to rid their correspondence of flat formalities that do not express the interest a firm feels in its patrons. Business colleges teach their students the value of the "personal touch" in letters. A letter-writer who can express sincerely his company's feelings is a commercial asset. More and more, in all kinds of ways, the modern world is learning that the indefinite, machine-made expression of thoughts is a costly fault, and that the power to put a writer's self into his composition is of high value. One illustration—it is only one of thousands—is a booklet called "Service Codes," printed by a manager of several large hotels to instruct his employees in what is required of them. A bare list of specifications would have accomplished nothing. The manager had the wit to see that he must put into paragraphs his own true feelings about what "service" is if he was to make his hotels successful. So he expressed his own knowledge and convictions, directing his mind at the employees to whom he appealed.

A doorman can SWING the door in a manner to assure the new guest that he is in *his* hotel, where people are prompt to serve him.

Or he can SLING the door in a way that sticks in the guest's crop and makes him expect to find at the desk a scratchy, sputtery pen, sticking in a potato.

When the clerk says, "Show *Mr. Robinson*," instead of "Show *the gentleman*," the guest immediately gets a warm feeling of being welcome. To be able to give a guest this feeling adds dollars to the income of this house and dollars to the salary of the clerk.

A waiter who can say "Pell Mell" when the guest says "Pell Mell," and "Paul Maul" when the guest says "Paul Maul," can make the guest think himself all right—and make us think the waiter is all right.

I hope to have our service always mean the best service throughout the world. You can help to make it so. Will you?

*Statler Service Codes*

The power to put our feelings into other people's minds is what a course in oral and written composition tries to cultivate. An untrained writer usually fails to realize that his own personality can be transferred to paper. To him a blank page is a forbidding place, where he must put stiff statements that might be made by anyone to anyone. He does not know how to be sincere; what he writes is unlike himself and unlike what he wants to say. An untrained speaker is abashed when he faces a committee, or a man at a desk whom he wishes to persuade. To him a listener is not a fellow-being, but a kind of forbidding thing, to which he speaks mechanical words. He does not know how to present his thoughts sincerely; what he says gives a wrong impression of himself. A textbook in composition is not a great aggregate of *don'ts*. All the pages of "must do this" and "never do that" are planned to warn young people of the ways in which they may be false to themselves, may make themselves appear ignorant and freakish, when in reality they have knowledge and are normal. All the cautions and warnings have one purpose: to show how a person may misrepresent himself. All the advice has one object: to show how a person may be true to himself when he tries to tell other people his thoughts.

## PART SIX

### THEMES FOR CRITICISM

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These are suitable for supplementary exercises of various sorts. Each theme may be criticized in detail, or several themes may be criticized with reference to one principle—such as unity of purpose, a straight line of development, beginnings and conclusions. The themes also furnish abundant material for criticism of paragraph-structure. They are grouped as types of composition thus:

Themes 1-4, Stories; 5-11, Descriptions; 12-19, Expositions; 20-25, Arguments.

#### 1. Principles and a Tiger

The man at the window in the lobby of the Eames and Hamilton Company shook his head. "No," he said to the soldier applicant, "we haven't any job now. Shall I make a note of you for future reference?"

"No, thanks," was the weary response. "Don't bother." Jim Lloyd had a right to be weary too. Since he had landed three weeks before from France, he had been looking for a job, with the same ill-success each time. He began to feel rather bitter against the United States, New York especially. Why shouldn't he? After fighting for six months he came back to be welcomed with neither job nor money. Living in Arizona, he knew no one in New York. At the present moment he had exactly one cent with which to buy his lunch and dinner.

In desperation he tried one more place. However, it was the same story. Walking out of the building, he turned toward the Battery from some unconscious impulse. While deeply engrossed in thought, he stepped into the gutter. Looking down at his foot, he was surprised to find a platinum pin set with twelve diamonds. His spirits rose automatically. Visions of a wonderful dinner appeared, and he began to look for a pawnshop. Suddenly something happened inside of him. His conscience began to work. "Confound my principles; finders keepers, losers weepers," he muttered to himself. However, conscience finally won. With his one and only cent he bought an evening paper.

Mr. Livingstone Newberry was an eccentric man, especially in some business matters. Nevertheless Wall street feared him as natives of India fear a tiger, on account of his sudden raids on the market. That

afternoon he sat quietly in his office, grumbling about nothing in particular. "Young man wants to see you, sir; says he found something you advertised for," said the head-office-boy.

"Show him in," roared the Tiger, looking rather interested. In walked Jim Lloyd. "Young man," quietly bellowed Mr. Newberry, "why did you return this? I offered no reward."

"I know it, sir. My confounded principles made me do it. I didn't want to." At this the Tiger almost purred. "I want you in this office. I don't care who you are, or what you know. You're honest! Will you start at fifty a week as my confidential clerk?"

"Yes, sir, but—"

"All right; report at eight-thirty tomorrow." He then glanced keenly at the worn uniform and at the hollow and unshaven cheeks. "Here, take this fifty in advance. You look as if you hadn't eaten for three days. You can go now."

Jim left, somewhat bewildered, but nevertheless glad he had those foolish "principles" he had learned at home.

## 2. The Death of a Bandit

On the upper reaches of the Sawmill river, once known as the Manahan, the waters flow at the base of a high, wild hill, the highest point in Winchester County. In the valley lies a pretty hamlet. This hill and village is the scene of my tale.

For several years the feline population of this village lived in constant terror. No cat great or small dared show his or her self outdoors after dark. Time and again the mangled remains of some foolish pet would be found in the fields, bordering on the village. This fierce bandit would not eat its prey, but seemed to kill for the love of killing. Sometimes a watchdog would appear in the morning, terribly scratched and bitten. One or two small dogs were killed. However, exceptions aside, cats seemed to be preferred by the midnight raider.

This situation created a feeling of permanent fear among the juvenile population, for who could tell that he would not find his pet dead some morning? Old hunters talked wisely about wild-cats, panthers, and wolves. Although many said that the game warden should act, no one showed any great desire to do anything himself. Thus was the whole neighborhood terrified.

One night last fall a party of men coon-hunting struck a warm trail. It was a great shock to them to have their dogs find the trail, as they believed there were no coon in the neighborhood and were merely hunting as a method of using up time. When they came on the remains of a house-cat, their excitement greatly increased. If they got a wild-cat,

wouldn't the village praise them? It would be in the *Pleasantville Journal*, and they would be heroes.

On through the dark woods they pressed, their hands clasped firmly on their gunstocks. At the foot of a large, dead tree the dogs barked "treed." One hunter, braver than the rest, was boosted up by his comrades. He peered into a hole, saw two great green eyes, and pulled both triggers of his gun at once. The recoil blew him ten feet away. When they fished out this prowler that had so long held the village cats in subjection, they found a giant, wild house-cat.

### 3. Casey

Casey was a native of Ireland. That might have been guessed upon reading the first word of the story, or whatever you may wish to call it. Casey! What a beautiful name! And Casey was indeed an Irishman. He wore overalls, smoked a clay pipe, and had a sense of humor that is seldom granted to anyone who is born outside of the Emerald Isle. And Casey was an honest man. "Oi'm just a wee moight too honest for politics," he explained. So he was throwing switches for the C. & R. Railroad.

In spite of his unimportant position Casey was known to most of the railroad officials on account of his good nature and his humor. He was often spoken of in the offices of the railroad, usually in connection with some humorous incident. But there was one official who never bothered about Casey or listened to the comments about him. It was Mr. Perkins, the passenger agent, one of those weazened infinitesimals that look through broad-rimmed spectacles and take themselves seriously.

But to get on with the story, Casey had some business to transact with Mr. Perkins one time. He was going to Chicago to some convention and wished to get a pass over the C. & R. He had to see Mr. Perkins for this, and at the first opportunity he went to his office. As he approached the door, he nonchalantly lit his pipe, tilted his felt hat over one ear, and then pushed the door open. Mr. Perkins looked up from his desk, startled.

"Oi wonder if Oi could get a pass to Chicago, Mr. Perkins?" Casey asked bluntly with a grin.

"What is your name?" asked Mr. Perkins seriously.

"Casey."

"Hem—this is not very business-like, Mr. Casey," said Mr. Perkins. "Suppose you return in an hour and knock on the door. I will tell you to come in, and then you can enter and take your hat off and your pipe



out of your mouth. I will ask your name and you can say that you are Mr. Casey, a switchman on the line. After that I will ask what I can do for you, and you may then state your business."

"Yes, sor," said Casey and solemnly withdrew, while Mr. Perkins returned to his work.

After a lapse of about an hour there came a quiet knock at the door.

"Come in," said Mr. Perkins.

Casey entered with a serious expression, closed the door behind him, and took his hat off and his pipe out of his mouth.

"Your name?" Mr. Perkins then asked.

"Casey, sor. Oi'm a switchman on the C. & R. line," was the answer.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Casey," said Mr. Perkins. "What can I do for you?"

"Sure, ye can go to the deuce," said Casey. "Oi got me pass on the Milwaukeee."

#### 4. He Had Confessed

"Oh, mother, can't we go to the manor today? You know it is only a short distance from father's monastery," said Winifred Elin.

"But, my dear child, George has not been at the manor for several weeks, and his father, Lord Dudley, says he does not know where he is," said her mother.

"All right, but I am very anxious to find out where he is. It is embarrassing to be betrothed to a man and not know where or what he is," said Winifred.

"Anyway, we have only a short time there, and neither you nor I have seen your father for two weeks," her mother said. "We must take that 10:04 train. Hurry up now. Get dressed at once."

The manor was not far distant, but the only convenient way to get there was by train.

The monastery was situated on the southeast corner of Lord Dudley's estate, which was in turn situated in the southern part of Stratfordshire. Winifred's father was the abbot of this particular monastery, and he had been separated from his family for a period of some two weeks or more.

George was the son of Lord Dudley and heir to his estate. He was engaged to Winifred, who had never met or seen him. Their parents had arranged everything without consulting either of the young people.

Soon the time to leave arrived, and Winifred was not yet ready, for she was preparing herself for the meeting, if George was home. Her mother hurried her, and they just caught the train in time.

When they arrived at their destination, Winifred's father met them and at once took them into the sitting-room, which every monastery has.

He soon began telling about his first experiences since his appointment. Winifred, who had been reading about Abbots, asked who his first penitent had been.

He said, "My first penitent was a young nobleman, who came to me after I had been here a few days, and said that he had committed murder. I felt sorry for the young man, for he looked too young and honest for that; and so I gave him small penance."

At this moment the door opened, and in walked George, who said, "I cannot hide my great crime, for to do so would bring out a double crime. Winifred, when your father came here, I was the first to confess—and I confessed murder. He did not know me, and so never said anything."

### 5. Customs of a Strange Community

On the sheltered side of the main street of an old New England town stands a dilapidated colonial mansion. In this house lives a community of artists which is indeed a strange gathering. The house is run by a middle-aged New England lady, by the name of Miss Brunner.

On a bright spring morning this old house is in a bustle about eight o'clock. Into the little dining-room the artists come for breakfast. Some are clad in the most bewildering styles. They care not about their personal appearance, as is quite evident. There is great laughter in the dining-room, for outside in the hall Mr. Tripp's dog has just caught one of the multitude of rats. Breakfast is over; everyone now goes for his sketching traps, and is off for the fields and upland country.

After a morning spent in sketching, some artists return to dinner; others remain afield; many come straggling in at hours impossible for Miss Brunner to provide dinner. After dinner a few men go off sketching, while others remain under the shading portico to talk, smoke, and dream away the spring day.

While the afternoon is hardly productive of any action in the community which one could call peculiar, the evening at the boarding house is an interesting period. After dark a fire is lighted in the living-room; there is much laughter over the desk, where an oil lamp is burning; Mr. Aborn is drawing cartoons of the other artists. Shrieks and peals of raucous laughter ring through the room, as Mr. Aborn, with a lead-pencil, strikingly portrays Mr. Waldemar's beard. Miss Brunner improvises at the piano, while Mr. Aborn sings in a melodious bass voice. The whole community is one of jollity, interest, and originality.

These are some of the customs of Miss Brunner's boarding-house. They do not seem, perhaps, so strange by description, but in experience they are not like the ways of any other community that I know of.

### 6. A Factory Town

I sat perched on the top of the hill, shading my eyes with my hand to protect them from the late afternoon sun. Before me lay a panorama of wonder: the city was spread out like a map. Great clouds of smoke seemed to make valiant attempts to conceal it from my view, but in vain; the strong wind prevailed.

Far to the right there seems to be a snake crawling slowly along. It is one of the fast expresses rushing at a headlong-pace through the limits of the city, spouting smoke and fire from its smokestack.

Here and there the gloomy clouds of smoke are broken by the green yards of residences or by some park struggling hard to get sunshine through the ever-present clouds.

The factories themselves, the cause of the eternal haze, are most interesting when they can be seen. They seem like little toy buildings that surely must be on fire when flames shoot from the chimneys.

What is that which gleams like a gold ball, with white wings surrounded by green? Oh, yes, the state Capitol that towers so majestically above the passer-by.

There to the left we see a square block of white seemingly set down in a forest of tall buildings of all sizes. That must be the city hall, from which this enormous city is guided.

Look far to the right beyond the greatest cloud of smoke. That surely is a snake gleaming through the haze. But no, there is a little white thing moving calmly on its surface. It is the river.

Turning back, we see, unnoticed before, the tall spires of churches and cathedrals. That large white one in the center is the battle monument, created in memory of the battle of Trenton.

Then just as the sun sheds its last lingering rays, our attention is called to a few spots moving on a checker-board—surely a ball-game. We look again. But no, the sun refuses to reveal any more secrets.

### 7. An Opening Scene

The curtain rose to disclose a stage-setting of quaint charm. The scene was laid somewhere in Japan, in a very primitive situation, with the gnarled and picturesque trees typical of the country rising above a very small bungalow with a low-angled roof. The side facing the audience was open, disclosing a small chest, two humble mats on the floor, and some other simple articles of the household.

Although no article of luxury was to be seen among the simple surroundings, there was not one that did not add to the ancient and picturesque tone of the whole. And the little paper prayers, hanging on a line to propitiate the god of rain, served to complete the effect.

Now entered two Japanese servants, who were going about their duties and chatting in broken English the while. When the articles were arranged for the entrance of their master, they squatted with feet crossed, displaying queer little wooden shoes. Then the owner of the house—if such a small edifice may be given that name—appeared, and it was at once evident that he was an American, who had retired to the picturesque seclusion of Japanese life in the country. Having removed his shoes before entering the house, as was the custom, he sat down and partook of a frugal meal of rice, helping himself a bit at a time with chop-sticks.

Presently a visitor is ushered in, who presents a most incongruous appearance. His dress is a combination, and a jarring one, of twentieth-century American civilization and the garb of old Japan. He is the son of the village image-maker, come to negotiate for a price for his father's most cherished image. His father is coming, he says, but he wishes to negotiate a price before the advent of the unmercenary parent. He wishes it to pay for his tuition at Cornell in America.

Finally the old image-maker makes his appearance, bowed, slow of step, and contrasting strongly with his modern and unworthy son. In his arms he carries a life-size object, draped in brown cloth. With due ceremony he lifts the veil, and discloses the image of a very pretty Japanese girl, clothed in an embroidered kimona. The image looks almost life-like, with its eyes closed and head bent a little to one side.

Instead of bargaining at once for the sale, however, the venerable image-maker settles down, and tells the story of a great Japanese hero, who, tired of life, embarks to an island off the coast of Japan, where he settles down to a hermit's life. War breaks out, and his people need him sorely, but he will not come, for he has fallen in love with the spirit of the willow tree under which he dwells. But she, having tried to persuade him to go, asks him to cut down an honorable and aged willow tree that throws his shadow on the hut. He does so, hears a little cry as the tree falls, and his love is no more. Nothing is left of her but a small sprig of willow. "And maybe, most honorable," concludes the image-maker, "the image will some day come to life, if you put on her bosom a mirror and a sprig of willow." The curtain falls.

This play was brought out in New York during the season of 1916-17, and, coming as it did in the midst of musical comedies, melodramas, and war plays, offered an extremely interesting diversion.

It would be telling the story of the rest of the play if one related whether the image ever did come to life. Let the hint be enough. This

first scene awakened in the writer mingled feelings, for the stage-setting, quaintness, and deliberate antiquity, blended with the romance of the play, made it one of the most interesting to me that I have ever seen.

### 8. The Drop

The main topic all that morning had been the twelve-foot drop. Whenever we would go over any rapids which I thought were rather dangerous, my guide would say that they were tame compared with the drop. He seemed to delight in dwelling on its dangers by telling how just a month ago John Peterson had broken a canoe there and was nearly drowned. The drop had in all exacted a toll of eight canoes, and one man had been drowned there. These statements did not cause me to anticipate with any great pleasure the time when we should come to the place.

I have never seen a river more crooked than the Brule, which is a river in northern Wisconsin. For instance, the distance from Winnebijou to the mouth of the Brule by road is thirteen miles, and by river it is ninety-six miles. It is so crooked that you may pass a farm-house and after going for about two miles see the same house again. The water is very fast, and in most places it is very shallow, making it hard to pick channels. No paddles are used, but long poles are used instead by the guide, who stands in the bow of the boat.

After a morning in which we encountered many rapids we came to the long-talked-about drop. It certainly looked as dangerous as it had been described to be. To us, coming around a bend, about a hundred yards from it, it looked like a sheer drop. However, as we drew nearer to it we saw that it was not a perpendicular fall, but that it sloped at an angle of about fifty degrees. We picked the only possible place to go over it, and that was right in the middle. Nevertheless, this was very dangerous because a small birch-tree had fallen right across the channel, and we didn't know how much resistance it would offer.

After deliberating over whether to risk it, the guides decided to take our supplies to a place below the drop, where we would eat our lunch. This appealed to me, because I was anxious to put off my fate as long as possible, and there was a chance that they might decide not to take a chance. Little else was talked about at lunch except the drop. My guide and I were to go first, because of the fact that he was the best guide, and if we made it all right, the others might try it. For some peculiar reason I didn't come back for a second helping of beans. Something had robbed me of my appetite.

After lunch we returned to our canoes, and my guide and I pushed out, while the others remained on the banks, watching us and making

encouraging remarks, pertaining to last words, etc. The sight of a rope in the hands of one of the guides made a big impression on my mind. We got out in mid-stream and maneuvered about, trying to decide on our course of action. We were drawing closer and closer to the edge, and the tree seemed to stand out more threateningly. I was sitting tensely in the bow of the boat, wishing I had decided not to try it.

Suddenly the guide gave a mighty shove forward, and we were off. The birch-tree held the canoe for a second, but it did not turn it sideways, and then the tree broke and the canoe was free. The guide had to check and swing the bow sharply to the right to avoid hitting a huge boulder. At the bottom the bow buried itself in a huge wave, drenching me and half filling the canoe. The boat was brought safely to the river bank, where we were met and congratulated by the rest of the party.

It is said that the bravest men are at some time in their lives afraid. I know I was, in this case. People say that when you are in great danger your whole past comes before you, but I didn't think of my past. That rope, which the guide had on the bank, occupied my mind. I was wondering about the length of it. However, I imparted none of this information to my friends, but tried to act nonchalant. But it is not wise to tempt fortune too often, and I wouldn't care to go over that drop again, because I don't want to sleep in Davy Jones's locker (if a river has such a thing on its bottom).

### 9. A Close Call

As we were on our way down the Rideau Canal about the last of August in my grandfather's house-boat, an incident occurred which might have ended our trip very unpleasantly.

As it was more or less interesting to watch a boat being put through the locks, we had all turned out "en force" on deck to watch the procedure. As we neared the locks, we sounded our air whistle in order not to have any delay about getting the gates opened. It usually takes a long time to wake the old lock-tenders up to the realization that a person may be in a hurry.

The first pair of gates had been opened, and the lock-tenders were all standing around waiting to catch our lines when we should get into the chamber. I don't know what was wrong with the captain that day. I never saw him do anything like it since. At any rate, we came sliding into the chamber at a pretty good clip. But nobody thought anything about it, as we all had complete confidence in the "Cap," as we all called him.

All would have gone smoothly had not one of the guides got so

excited and messed his line up so that he didn't reach the shore with it. He hastily started to recover it, but meantime we were steadily approaching the lower gate with a fall of twenty feet into the next chamber. Of course it had to be the stern line, without which the boat couldn't be stopped. Had we hit that gate, it might have been kind of exciting. As it was, however, the guide managed to get the line ashore just about in time, and the boat was stopped within a few inches of the gate. I can tell you we were all pretty nervous for a little while. It would have been a nasty mess had we gone "over the top."

### 10. Dipping Cattle

A herd of about one thousand cattle are driven into a pen. At one end of the pen is a tank measuring about twelve feet by six feet filled with a dark-brown liquid, which is a medicine to kill the ticks which infest the cattle. A good-natured crowd of cowboys drive the cattle one by one into the tank. At the edge of the tank, which is sunk into the ground, is a greased slide. As the cattle approach the slide, they hesitate, afraid to go on; but a cowboy is there to give the necessary push, and amid the yelling of the crowd and the bellowing of the steers, they go sliding down into the liquid. They sink entirely out of sight, come up struggling, and swim across to get out by a rough slide which is fixed for this purpose. All that drips off of them, flows back into the tank, to save the waste of the liquid. The tank is made narrow, so that it will be hard for the steer to turn around. Sometimes a young calf turns around and tries to get out on the wrong side. Then the cowboys have to lasso it and drag it to the other side.

While I was there, a calf went down the slide. He was very young, and he wasn't very strong. He hit the medicine so unexpectedly that he must have swallowed some before he could get his breath. When he came up, he was turned around. He tried to go up the slide. The cowboys immediately lassoed him. When they had dragged him to the other side, they let go, as they thought that he would climb up of his own accord. The calf tried to struggle up, but after a few attempts he sank into the medicine. After a great deal of trouble they were finally able to rescue him.

### 11. Dawn

Overhead, set in the dark sky, shine the cold, bright stars. Thousands and thousands of them light up the world below with a pale white light. Dim shapes can be seen faintly—very faintly—against the horizon. One stops. A long, quavering howl arises, as a coyote lifts his muzzle skyward.

Slowly the stars fade. A cold, damp wind rushes up the cañon near by, bearing with it a few wisps of fog. The light wisps are soon superseded by heavy masses of mist, which roll up the draws like a wind-tossed sea.

On the top of the hills, with the stronger light, one can see huge trees standing like sentinels on the walls of a town. The open spaces begin to show from the brushy slopes of the hills.

The valleys and arroyos are now filled with a solid bank of fog, which whirls around and never ceases to move. Through this blanket, in the east, a bright spot slowly rises, the sun. Everything becomes damp, as if a light shower had fallen in the night.

As the blanket of fog lifts, the light gets stronger and stronger, until all the small objects are easily made out. Here and there where the clouds part, bright sunshine streams through. Thousands of feet above the earth in a tiny spot of blue floats a condor, which screams aloud as if to proclaim a new day.

## 12. A Window-Closer

It was twenty minutes past seven, five minutes after the rising bell had rung. From our cozy beds we looked out over a bleak, cold room swept by the icy northern winds. "Say, John, you close the window this morning, will you? I did yesterday," I entreated my roommate. "All right, Ell." So saying, Jack Carter threw back his bedcovers and jumped out. At that moment such a blast of wind struck him that he could scarcely catch his breath, but in a second the pane was down. With numb fingers we pulled on our clothes and crawled despondently down to breakfast.

That afternoon when school was over, an idea came to me. Coming in from football practice earlier than usual, I bought an old Big Ben, from which I immediately removed the bell. My next step was to tie a piece of string to the alarm key and thence to a large stone that I had secured out in the yard. This done, I put a chest that I had in the room on an old clothing box about half way to the window and, after winding the alarm, balanced the rock on the end of the chest opposite the bureau. Thereupon I took another cord, tied it to the weight, and fastened the other end to the wooden frame at the bottom of the window pane. This was my plan: I would set the alarm for six o'clock; at the desired moment it would go off, turn the key, release the weight, and close the window. As a result, when we rose on the following morning, we would find the room—but wait. I worked my apparatus two or three times before going to bed and was rewarded by hearing the window slam as many times.



It was twenty minutes after seven, five minutes after the rising bell had rung. From our cozy beds Jack and I looked out over a bleak, cold room. Someone had cut the string.

### 13. The Production of Steel

The production of steel is one of the foremost of Uncle Sam's industries. Since 1912 the United States has taken and held the lead in the output of steel. There are several reasons for this superiority.

First, the United States, especially in Pennsylvania and in Michigan, has large beds of the natural ore. Near these beds are large quantities of the coal necessary for the making of the finished steel from the crude ore.

The ore is mined in deep pits just as coal is. It is then hoisted to the surface and taken away to a so-called blast-furnace. Here the ore is melted red-hot, together with lime, which is known as a flux. The impurities in the ore combine with the lime and, being lighter than the ore, rise to the top and are drawn off. These impurities together with the lime have the technical name of "slag." From the blast-furnace the melted iron is run into molds and allowed to cool. We now have pig-iron.

Pig-iron is changed to steel by either of two methods, the Bessemer process or the open-hearth process. The former produces an expensive but excellent kind of steel, the latter a cheaper and poorer kind of steel.

In the Bessemer process the pig-iron is placed in a large graphite crucible, holding as much as a ton. On the iron is heaped coke and lime. The crucible is heated till the iron is white. A certain amount of Spiegel iron is now added. The exact amount is determined by expert chemists. The Spiegel iron, which consists of iron, carbon, and manganese, is added to give a hardness to the steel. The steel is now allowed to cool very slowly. It is cut up into desired shapes and is ready for commerce.

In the open-hearth process the pig-iron is placed on a checkerwork of iron, which has been previously heated. Over the iron a forced draft of air oxidizes a quantity of coke. The coke, which is a form of carbon, now unites with the iron, changing it to steel. The hot gases given off pass over another checkerwork of iron, which are becoming heated. The next load of pig-iron is placed on the newly-heated checkerwork. This process is therefore economical and results in the selling of the steel for a lower price than that of the Bessemer process. The grade of steel is, however, inferior.

One thing more is left in the production of the steel. This last thing

is called "tempering." The steel is heated to a fairly high degree. It is then dipped in water or oil, generally the latter. When the iron, or rather steel, is now taken out, it is hard and brittle. If it is not brittle or hard enough, the dipping in oil is repeated. The steel is now absolutely perfect and is ready to be shipped to its destination, where it can be changed and repaired as conditions require.

According to President Schwab of the Bethlehem Steel Works, the United States, with its annual output of millions of tons and its employment of thousands of men, bids fair to lead the world forever in this young but enormous industry.

#### 14. How to Build a Shop in the Home

The first thing needed, of course, is a good place to build the shop. A place which has good light and is usually cool should be selected. Also attention should be given to heating in the winter. If a good clean room in the cellar, with good lighting and heating facilities, can be found, it would suit the purpose admirably.

There are a number of materials and tools necessary for building a good shop, and these are as follows: sixty feet of cypress boards, one foot wide and one foot in thickness; fifteen feet of cypress beams, three inches square; two pounds of number-six nails; a hammer, a saw; a chisel, about one inch wide; a plane; a draw-shave; a vise; a ten-foot tape-measure; a square; a spirit-level. This covers practically all the necessary materials.

Naturally, the bench is the first thing to be considered. The length and width of the bench is determined by the amount of room at the disposal of the builder. A frame, consisting of four legs of the desired height, and a rectangle built around the top of the four legs, should be made; all of this is made from the cypress beams. After the frame has been further strengthened by another rectangle, built around the mid-points of the four legs, the top of the bench may be put on by nailing to the top of the frame cypress boards of the desired length. If the width of the boards is too great, they can be easily planed down to fit. Thus the bench is completed.

The next thing to be done is to fit the shop properly with tools. The following are sufficient: one hammer; two saws, one cross-cut and one rip-saw; two planes, one jack-plane and one block-plane; one draw-shave; one square; one spirit-level; one steel scraper; one small ax; one vise; one large carpenter's pencil; one brace and six bits of various sizes; one steel drill with bits; four files, one rasp, one medium, and two fine. These can be bought at any hardware store.

### 15. The First Great Gun

One winter all the boys in my neighborhood joined together to build a snow fort. The building took about five days, and the stronghold was the largest in town. After its completion we separated into two armies, which defended and attacked the fort on alternate days. As my fellow-soldiers were not very successful, we decided to make some artillery.

I had once seen in a magazine the plans of a machine for throwing snow-balls. Although I had forgotten most of it, I remembered enough to go by. The cannon was worked on the same principle as the ancient catapult. The force of a bar pulled against another bar with great force threw the snow-ball. The system of high-angle fire combined with great muzzle velocity was used.

As our total capital would about cover the cost of a spring, which was the most essential part of the machine, we had to get the wood wherever we could. A saw-horse, which would have supplied us with most of the gun-carriage, could not be found. However, we got some good lumber from a house that was being built near the fort.

The gun-carriage consisted of a beam about three feet long, supported at each end by two sticks of the same length as the main beam. These were braced at the bottom and halfway up, giving it when viewed from the side the appearance of the letter "A." Parallel to the top piece and at the same height as the cross-braces was another stick. To this was hinged another piece of limber wood about a yard in length, which was also connected to the top piece by a powerful spring. In the end of the throwing-arm was a cup for holding the projectile.

As it would throw a snow-ball farther than any of us could, we had the enemy at our mercy for several days.

### 16. What Is Happiness?

He sat in his mansion on Riverside Drive. He looked the picture of content—and why shouldn't he? Earnest Morrill was a rich man. Years before, he had made his start on Wall Street. Here, unlike most men, he had succeeded. Luck had always stood by him, and as a result he had won. The life of Earnest Morrill was an easy one. He arose about nine o'clock, with everything ready for him. After breakfast he went to his office in his car and remained there doing a little business until twelve-thirty. Then he lunched at one of his clubs with some one of his wealthy acquaintances. The afternoon was spent at golf. In the evening he usually dined at some fashionable restaurant and afterwards went to some theater or a club, where he spent the evening at billiards, pool, or cards.

But on this particular evening Earnest Morrill didn't feel as if he

wanted to spend the night as he usually did. So after dinner he had come to his house and now was sitting in a window overlooking the street. It was spring, and the balmy air quickened his blood, making him feel years younger. Now Earnest Morril was absolutely contented with the world. He sat there in the warm air, leaning back in his big arm-chair. He was smoking one of his best imported cigars, and, after the fine dinner he had had, nothing trivial could have bothered him. Earnest Morril was wondering why he had come home to spend the evening. He gazed out into the street and could see things fairly distinctly, as it was a full-moon night, especially beautiful in this spring evening. He looked contemptuously at the workers returning home and laughed heartily at a fight between two small boys over a dime that they had found in the street. Earnest Morril withdrew his gaze from the street and looked about his well-furnished room. He sighed deeply and, blowing out a cloud of smoke, muttered, "Who could be happier than I? I have everything a soul could wish." Again Earnest Morril sighed deeply.

Then he gazed out of the window and saw a boy and girl walking down the street, the former's arm around the girl's waist. Earnest Morril saw the latter gaze up into the boy's eyes for an instant, and in that glance read the love between the pair. He saw them disappear down the street and thought of their youthfulness, their health, and the future which lay ahead of them. A great longing for some friend—a real friend—arose in the rich man's breast. He felt his loneliness, and the realization cut him deeply that he had no heirs to carry on his name, no wife who loved him. He thought of the girl whom he had given up for his career in business. Tears of self-pity welled up in his eyes. The man who a little while before had thought himself the happiest man on earth realized at the sight of two young lovers that he was alone in the world. And the wretched rich man threw up his hands in a gesture of despair and cried pleadingly, "Oh, God, I wish I were dead."

### 17. Rearranging Our Dates

Several men of Chicago have devised a new calendar. It consists of thirteen months, the extra one, Liberty, following February. Each month has twenty-eight days, thus making three hundred and sixty-four days. The New Year's day (the 365th) is not counted in the calendar and comes between the last day of December and the first of January. "Correction Day," every four years, is not counted either and comes with New Year's day, which makes two holidays right together. One calendar will last forever if the printing and paper stays in good condition.

Such a calendar as this will make any old conservative gasp for horror, or think you are fooling with him. In fact I believe that it will take about five years to get the country used to it, for some people won't understand it or recognize it. When the Gregorian Calendar was adopted in 1752 by the English Parliament, people thought they were being defrauded in their pay, for the error was eleven days, and went about shouting, "Give us back our eleven days." It took till 1760 to get going right.

But this is no reason why the United States should not adopt it. The fact that before it took eight years to get settled doesn't say that it will now, for almost everybody can read and write; whereas in 1752 hardly any of the working class could read. It will make every date, such as July fifth, come on the same day every year, which will be a good advantage. The one day every year will be just right for factories and business men to take inventory and for cleaning up after Christmas. This will be just the time for young people, just married, to get settled. The greatest help, however, will be in the banking business and in stocks and bonds, for with this calendar any one can tell easily on what day they expire. With the calendar we use now clerks have to figure this out, but with the new one he knows immediately. All things considered, the opposition to it is but slight, while the arguments for it will make almost every business man accept it.

### 18. Our Punt

The boards which the carpenters were using were excellent poplar and ought to make a fine boat. We had been wishing for a boat to catch some good bass which were in a pond on the farm and couldn't be fished for very well from the shore.

That night Bert, my brother, and I obtained permission to use enough of these poplar boards to make a boat with. The next morning early we started out, having obtained the other material needed. We left the machine at the barn and carried the boards and other things down to the pond, which was about a quarter of a mile away. We then sawed these boards into two twelve-foot strips for the sides and two four-foot strips for the back. We also fashioned the oars and seats and the bottom out of the same material. We also stopped the cracks where the planks came together with a sort of cotton which is used for that purpose by ship-builders. We now had a flat-bottomed boat twelve feet long and four feet wide, which we painted red. As it was now about four o'clock, we went home, tired but happy.

Two days after that we again set out for the country fully equipped with all sorts of fishing tackle. We found the boat was all right, but it

was a little too heavy. After fishing a long time I finally caught a nice two-pound black bass, and from then on we had good luck. Late that afternoon we drove home to exhibit with pride a fine string of fish, consisting of ten good-sized black bass, five white perch, and two pickerel.

### 19. Why We Have Winter

Why we have winter is a hard question to explain, but I will try to do my best. There are two or three reasons that astronomers tell us, but I will take up only one.

First of all the Earth is about ninety-three million miles away from the Sun. The Sun is just about one hundred times as large as the Earth is. The Earth travels around the Sun in a great ellipse at a great speed, and it takes a year to do it.

In the summer the Earth is about three million miles farther away from the Sun than it is in the winter. You would think this would make it cooler, but, in reality, it makes it warmer, because the Sun shines almost straight down on the earth. The reason for this is that the Earth's axis, or the imaginary line drawn from the North Pole to the South Pole, is standing almost straight up and down.

Now, when summer is over and winter begins, the Earth goes about half way around the Sun. While doing this, its axis leans over more to one side. Also the Earth comes closer to the Sun. But the reason that it is not warmer is that the Sun's rays hit the Earth on a decided slant, which greatly lessens the heat they are able to make.

Some people think that snow makes winter, but that is not so. We can have a very cold winter, and not have any snow at all. Snow is just caused by the condition of the air around us. Also snow storms just extend over a small part of the country.

### 20. The Unfairness of Examinations

A boy sits down to his final Algebra examination, sharpens his pencil, and starts the first example. He knows that the "exam" counts half of the year's mark and that on it depends whether he will return to the same class again in September or not. He looks at the first problem, starts it, but finding it rather hard and thinking it best to do more of the easier ones than one or two like that, leaves it for the next. He deserts that in like manner and does one or two of the easy ones. As the time draws to a close, he gets more flurried, can't work at all, and hands in a forty-per-cent paper.

Very likely that boy had enough knowledge to pass with a fair mark, had he kept his head. Thousands of such cases are to be found, and the question of the unfairness of examinations is a much debated one. Of



forced to work (everyone knows that a boy works much harder if he is working by his own will). Also voluntary training tests the spirit of a school better than compulsory training. If the school has good spirit, all the boys will come out for every sport, but, on the contrary, if there is poor school-spirit, there will never be enough men to make a good team. Another disadvantage of voluntary athletics is that a boy is likely to loaf more and not to receive a proper amount of exercise; everyone would get lazy and lie around the school and just loaf. If this kind of affair should happen, the school would be absolutely corrupted and receive a very poor reputation.

Contrary to voluntary athletics is compulsory training, which, of course, has its disadvantages. If there is compulsory training, often the boys become cranky and hate all athletics, because they have to work. They always try to discover some heart-trouble, so as to escape compulsory training. Some boys have weak hearts and are not allowed to play baseball, but may play football. Similar foolish cases arise. But if a boy has to try out for every sport, he may develop some unknown talent, which would never have been discovered otherwise, as the boy would have just hung around, if athletic training had been voluntary. In the obligatory method a school would develop better teams because of more trying out and because of more competition. Also this method would keep a boy in far better health than the other method.

Therefore I believe that compulsory athletic training is better than voluntary training. In voluntary training a boy would work harder, but in the other there would be more competition. In the former the teams would be poor, while in the latter the teams would be excellent because of there being so many to pick from. Last, a boy gains much more from compulsory training in athletics than voluntary athletics, because his unknown talents are brought to light, while in the other his worst character is shown. Compulsory training shows the best side of a boy.

## 22. Protection Against Fire Is Needed

Are the forest-fire laws of New York State adequate? This is a question which interests not only the conservationists, but also every other public-minded citizen of the Empire State.

The first argument of those opposed to a better system is that of expense. A fire-warden must be a man of fair ability and education as a forester. In these times of high costs no such man could be obtained cheaply. Although the salaries of the wardens would be the main item of expense, there must be many other expenditures.

Many claim that there is no forest in New York State, outside of



the forest preserve counties, which is amply protected, that is worth the cost of preserving. What loss is it to the people if twenty acres of brush and small trees are burned off by some chance fire?

As to giving the wardens, such as they are, the right to force men to fight the fires, there is danger that they will misuse their power. Either the warden would take everyone without using any judgment, or would be so weak that he would not take any.

There is no answer to the expense argument. A good system of fire prevention and fighting would cost money. The present wardens are inadequate in numbers, but are so underpaid that they can devote no time to their duties as wardens, but must engage in some other occupation to earn a living.

Of course most of the forest outside of the preserve counties is of little value, but this is fast being remedied. This spring nearly an acre of flourishing young pines was destroyed by a grass fire which had burned unhindered all afternoon under the eyes of a village. This may be a small matter, but as a great number of people as well as New York City have planted young trees, this is a very real danger.

The most real and serious danger of a fire in a settled region is to buildings. In the past year I have known two barns which were destroyed and one house barely saved.

For these reasons I believe that a new law should be enacted, giving adequate protection.

### 23. In Favor of Sunday Recreation

In the Bible there may be found a commandment which is to the effect that one should labor six days in the week and rest on the seventh. From this many judge that it is a sin to play or view any kind of a game on that day. In taking this stand they claim to be upholding the word of God. If indulging in sports were to be recognized as being all right, they think that the Sabbath would lose much of its sacredness. To them it seems inconsistent for a man to attend Church in the morning and play golf in the afternoon.

But this belief appears to be one of great narrow-mindedness, for today it is not considered necessary for a person to assume on Sunday a more pious and holy look and behave himself any differently from what he would on another day. I believe that the man who is moderately religious seven days in the week is more of a Christian than the one who advertises his religion so prominently on the Sabbath. It is with the former kind of belief that the men are coming back from France, and they will do much toward making religion more practical in the future.

In my opinion enjoying the beautiful open air in some form of game on a Sunday afternoon is far from sinning, for there are few things more capable of inspiring noble thoughts than the beauties of nature, as they are God's handiwork. Along this line is the fact that this wholesome pastime prevents some men from doing worse things, which they might be tempted to do if they could not enjoy themselves this way. Perhaps the best reason is that for many men Sunday is their only day for recreation, and, as play is an absolute necessity, if a man would do his work right, they are entitled to this pleasure. For the above reasons I say that good, clean sports on Sunday should be tolerated and not looked on with disfavor.

#### 24. "Shall We Rise Ten Minutes Later?"

Several times about school I have heard boys complaining because the rising bell is rung too early in the morning. They argue that it ought to ring at ten minutes past seven instead of at seven o'clock. Some fellows think the change would be foolish, because it is a well-known fact that the bell always makes you feel twice as sleepy as you are, and the result is that you turn over, and before you know it, you are sound asleep again. Then the warning bell rings and, before you realize the fact, you are late for study hall. The ordinary fellow, getting up at seven o'clock, dresses leisurely, doing something else like reading or talking while he is putting on his clothes. He does not like to be hurried and usually uses up the full half hour given him to dress in. If he had but twenty minutes, the chances are he would get into his apparel in the same slow way, and the bell would go off before he was through. He would pick up his tie and collar and rush for the study hall. If he were on time, he would have to stop outside and put on his collar, but by that time the second bell would have rung and he would be late. If he went in without his collar, the master on charge would kick him out, accompanied with a demerit, which is worse than two marks.

On the other hand some argue that if the bell were rung later, the fellow would have enough "pep" to get up immediately and, when he had dressed with fair speed, would reach the study hall with plenty of time to spare. Besides this he would still have his ten minutes extra sleep. This would teach some of the fellows not to hog the showers in the morning, so that everyone would have a chance at them. The fellows, knowing they had no time to waste, would jump out of bed, take a shower, get dressed, and go down to study hall, all with some real "snap" which would make them feel better. There would be no time for rough-housing in the shower room.

Therefore with five reasons—namely, more “pep,” the extra sleep, no hogging of showers, less lateness, and your better feelings, I think I have proved that it would be a good idea to change the rising time ten minutes.

### **25. Resolved: That Attendance at Baseball Games Be Compulsory**

We of the negative hold that compulsory attendance at the baseball games is not necessary. In the first place, to compel a person to see a game against his will will make a poor spirit, and we hold that a half-empty grand-stand is better than one full of discontented persons who are not interested in the game. Those who come because they have to pay no attention to the game and spend most of their time rough-housing or going out to the wagon for food. You of the affirmative will say that the other school will not think much of our spirit if the stands are not full, but how much less will they think of our spirit if they know that attendance is compulsory?

We of the affirmative hold that a compulsory attendance at the baseball game is not only a good thing, but is necessary for the spirit of the school. Let us take into consideration the cheering at the games. For some time there has not even been a regular cheer-leader present, and the few cheers that have been given are weak and ragged. The stands are not full, so it is impossible with the best leading to get a good cheer.

Our opponents have said that if the stands were filled because they had to be the spirit would be poor. Perhaps it would be for some time, but the aversion to doing a thing because we have to is much like the small boy who does not like to get washed, but after a short time of compulsory scrubbing is perfectly willing to do it himself.

Again my opponents have said that order could not be kept in the stands. This would be the least of our worries, for if a few seniors would condescend to watch their teams play occasionally, their presence would do much to quiet the stands. I ask you which makes the worst appearance: a disorderly stand and good cheering, or an empty stand and no cheering?

When our teams go to other schools the stands are always full, and the visiting team is always given a good cheer, but what do we do when those schools send teams here? Sometimes there are enough fellows on the stand to give both teams a cheer at the beginning of the game, but more often there are not. When the visiting teams leave, sometimes the few fellows that are around the entrance of the building give them a good “send off.” but more often there is no one there to even say “Good-bye.”

## APPENDIX

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### DIVISION I—LETTER FORMS \*

1. **Heading.** There are two principal forms of headings for letters. The first is the kind used in business correspondence. The name of the firm and its address are printed in full; the date is written at the right-hand side of the sheet, and at the left the name and address of the person who is being written to.

#### **PRACTICAL DRAWING COMPANY**

PUBLISHERS AND DEALERS IN

**TEACHERS AIDS AND ART SUPPLIES**

**DALLAS, TEXAS.**

**March 10, 1917**

**Scott, Foresman and Company**

**623 South Wabash Avenue**

**Chicago, Illinois**

**Gentlemen:**

The above letter-head is formal; it is the kind commonly used in all sorts of offices; it is the proper kind in writing to a firm or a person with whom we are not well acquainted. If a person who has no printed stationery wishes to use this form of letter, he writes his own address at the right, thus:

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\* Reprinted from *Sentence and Theme*.

Fort Salonga, N. J.  
August 28, 1916

The Dieges and Clust Co.  
20 John Street  
New York City

My dear Sirs:

You will notice that each line in the heading begins one step farther to the right than the line above, but that "My dear Sirs" begins back at the margin. Another common arrangement in typewritten letters is this "block" style:

Mr. Myron E. Shelley  
466 West Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio  
My dear Sir:

This is not recommended for handwriting.

The second form of letter-head is the one ordinarily used in friendly or informal correspondence; the address of the person to whom we write is omitted. If we are using printed stationery, we have only two lines to write.

HARRIMAN NATIONAL BANK  
NEW YORK.

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

January 30, 1917.

My dear Joyce:

If we are not using printed stationery, we put our address at the right.

407 East St.

Knoxville, Tenn.

February 3, 1917

Dear Herbert:

**2. Salutation.** The usual "salutations" are these, arranged in order of their formality:

Dear Jack  
Dear Oakford

My dear McLean  
Dear Miss Shields

My dear Mr. Wallace

Notice that *Miss* has no period after it. *Mr.* and *Mrs.* must always have the period. Titles must be written out in full.

Dear Doctor Black

My dear Captain Hahn

Dear Professor Cairns

In writing to a person whose name is not known to you—for instance, the editor of a paper or some official of a company—use "My dear Sir" or "My dear Madam." In writing to a company use "My dear Sirs" or "Gentlemen." Notice that *dear* begins with a small letter unless it is the first word.

**3. Margin and indention.** The first line of a letter should begin under the end of the salutation; there should always be a margin at the left, and it is common to have a margin at the right of typewritten letters. Paragraphs should be indented, as in themes.

**4. Conclusion.** For closing a letter "Yours truly" is the most usual phrase. This is proper for almost any letter, from a friendly note to a formal epistle. Other expressions in common use are: "Yours very truly," "Sincerely yours," "Yours very sincerely."

**5. Addressing.** The envelope is usually addressed thus:

Mr. Allan Kay Needham  
24 East 14th Street  
Louisville  
Kentucky

The block style is also common when the address is typewritten.

No commas are needed at the ends of lines on envelopes, nor in letter-heads. Use periods always for abbreviations.

6. **The complete letter.** Here is a complete informal note in two paragraphs.

261 Weymouth St.  
Columbus, Ohio  
April 16, 1915

My dear George:

The dinner on Wednesday night was eminently successful. It was a bit trying, because I had put all my eggs in one basket, and it would have been sad to see them smashed. But everything went well; my talk was listened to enthusiastically, and seventeen of those present signed.

I shall get off for the coast next week, and we shall be able to open our office immediately on my return — not later than May 20th.

Most sincerely,  
Sumner

## DIVISION II\*—SPELLING

Senior high school is not the place to teach the spelling of common words; yet since an ordinary class has not mastered all the simple spellings in the lower grades, it is usually necessary to review these words with thoroughness and vigor. The student should attack the list of 500 forms with proper respect for the difficulties it contains.

(1) Every word has been a bane to intelligent pupils. (2) Every one is known and feared by experienced teachers in every grammar school in the country; most of the words are feared by college instructors; some have brought chagrin to college graduates. (3) Most of them have caused confusion because of some similarity to another word. (4) Every such confusion may become a deep-rooted habit which only persistent exercise of will-power can destroy. (5) A habit that is apparently got rid of may reappear again and again in the writing that the student does when his attention is on other matters. (6) Anyone who fully conquers the words given in the following lists, so that the right spelling habitually comes from his pen, will never be classed as a poor speller. Nobody knows why this is true, but it is a fact. If the brain has grown so careful that all these common words are always written correctly, the result of the training is that the eyes and fingers have learned to be alert every instant; there is no opportunity for carelessness.

Section A is composed of type-forms that are invariable for given classes of words. The knowledge of such forms is more elementary, and very much more important, than knowledge of single words.

## SECTION A

## RULES FOR DERIVED FORMS

1. If a word ends in *y* preceded by a consonant, change *y* to *i* before a suffix.

|         |            |            |         |
|---------|------------|------------|---------|
| cries   | ladies     | ugliness   | cried   |
| tries   | allies     | happiness  | tried   |
| replies | hobbies    | business   | replied |
| denies  | bodies     | heaviness  | denied  |
| applies | delicacies | loneliness | applied |

---

\* The rules, lists, and more specific comments in Divisions II, III, and IV are numbered consecutively for ready reference. They thus form a separate manual of the mechanics of composition.



|          |           |          |
|----------|-----------|----------|
| uglier   | readiest  | happily  |
| happier  | easiest   | giddily  |
| busier   | knottiest | sorriily |
| heavier  | funniest  | greedily |
| lovelier | prettiest | nattily  |

2. But active participles end in *ying*: *crying*, *trying*, etc. And the *ie* verbs are made to correspond in form: *lying*, *tying*, *dying*.

3. Drop a final *e* before a vowel.

|        |          |             |
|--------|----------|-------------|
| come   | coming   | puzzling    |
| write  | writing  | gambling    |
| dine   | dining   | settling    |
| argue  | arguing  | lovable     |
| pursue | pursuing | conceivable |

A sure mark of an uneducated person is that he cannot drop a final *e*.

The only exceptions to this rule are: (1) verbs that end in *ee* or *oe*: *seeing*, *freeing*, *agreeing*, *hoeing*, *shoeing*, *canoeing*; (2) words like *traceable*, *peaceable*, *noticeable*, *vengeance*, *manageable*, to keep them from looking like the sounds of "cable" and "gable."

4. But *e* is regularly kept before a consonant.

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| definitely  | surely      |
| immediately | sincerely   |
| statement   | lonely      |
| sureness    | safety      |
| fickleness  | arrangement |

The exceptions are *argument*, *ninth*, *truly*, and the *dg* words like *judgment*, *acknowledgment*.

5. Double a final consonant preceded by a single vowel if the word is of only one syllable, or if the accent is on the last syllable.

|          |          |            |             |
|----------|----------|------------|-------------|
| stopped  | stirred  | forgotten  | omitted     |
| stopping | stirring | forgetting | omitting    |
| grabbed  | stunned  | occurred   | biggest     |
| grabbing | stunning | referring  | hottest     |
| hemmed   | repelled | controlled | sadder      |
| running  | rebellng | beginning  | transmitter |

Verbs like *acquit* and *equip* also double the consonant.

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| acquitted | equipping |
|-----------|-----------|

But do not double for plurals like *gases*, *buses*.

6. Do not double the final consonant of a verb if the accent is not on the last syllable.

|          |                                  |         |
|----------|----------------------------------|---------|
| suffered | opened                           | offered |
|          | traveled (preferable in America) |         |

7. It is proper—and according to recent usage better—to form a possessive singular always in one way: add an apostrophe and *s*.

|                  |           |           |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|
| lady's           | Holmes's  | another's |
| boy's            | Burns's   | other's   |
| a dollar's worth | Dickens's | one's     |
| an hour's work   | Cross's   | fox's     |

Failure to observe this simple and invariable rule is astonishingly frequent even in the writing of advanced students. Book-dealers' catalogues not infrequently show the wrong form of the possessive of *Dickens*.

8. The possessive of a plural that ends in *s* is always formed by one invariable rule, the easiest imaginable: put an apostrophe after the *s*.

|                   |                     |                          |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| the Smiths' house | five dollars' worth | the canaries' songs      |
| an officers' club | three hours' work   | the Americans' influence |

9. The possessive of a plural that does not end in *s* is formed as if the noun were singular.

|                 |                    |                   |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| the men's wages | the women's rights | the people's idol |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|

10. The possessives of personal pronouns have no apostrophe: *its*, *hers*, *yours*, *theirs*. The possessive of the relative pronouns is entirely irregular—*whose*.

11. A very common suffix is *ly*. If an adjective ends in *al*, the adverb formed by *ly* must have two *l*'s:

|         |               |                  |
|---------|---------------|------------------|
| really  | naturally     | enthusiastically |
| finally | grammatically | principally      |

12. Adjectives of the following type always end in one *l*:

|         |            |            |
|---------|------------|------------|
| careful | thoughtful | successful |
| hopeful | useful     | skilful    |

13. Adjectives of the following type have an *o* in the last syllable:

|            |         |          |             |
|------------|---------|----------|-------------|
| victorious | famous  | gorgeous | strenuous   |
| glorious   | envious | enormous | eonspicious |

The only exceptions are *bogus*, *citrus*, and *minus*.

14. A common prefix is *dis*.

dis + appear

dis + appoint

dis + agree

dis + satisfied

## SECTION B

### GRAMMAR-GRADE WORDS

(The following list is recommended by the Economy Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English. One hundred and fifty of the 216 words, unnumbered, are used in the writing of pupils in the second grade, as shown in Jones's *Concrete Investigation*. Figures 3-7 indicate the grades in which the words begin to be used in writing; "0" shows words not given by Jones.)

#### 15. Early in the Second Grade

|       |      |       |       |
|-------|------|-------|-------|
| any   | know | such  | went  |
| does  | many | there | where |
| first | much | they  | write |
| goes  | off  | too   | wrote |
| here  | some | very  |       |

#### 16. Second Grade

|         |        |         |         |
|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| again   | every  | running | tried   |
| asked   | having | school  | two     |
| been    | hear   | shining | when    |
| buy     | heard  | stopped | which   |
| coming  | knew   | sure    | whole   |
| cried   | making | taking  | whose   |
| dear    | near   | their   | writing |
| done    | once   | threw   |         |
| dropped | only   | told    |         |

#### 17. Third Grade

|           |                     |          |          |
|-----------|---------------------|----------|----------|
| afraid    | early               | lose     | shows    |
| all right | easy                | lose     | speak    |
| almost 3  | enough              | loving 3 | though   |
| already   | father              | new      | together |
| always    | forty 3             | none     | truly 3  |
| asks      | friend              | often    | until    |
| beginning | great               | people   | woman    |
| children  | have (as in         | please   | women    |
| color     | "should <i>have</i> | quite 3  | would    |
| could     | known")             | says     |          |
| doctor    | its                 | should   |          |

## 18. Fourth Grade

|            |          |            |            |
|------------|----------|------------|------------|
| across     | choose 3 | minute     | (through?) |
| also 3     | don't    | piece      | tired      |
| among      | easiest  | pleasant 3 | Tuesday    |
| because    | February | quiet 3    | used to    |
| before     | fourth   | ready      | weather 3  |
| believe    | hour     | receive 4  | Wednesday  |
| built      | instead  | Saturday   | week       |
| business 4 | just     | seems 4    | written 3  |
| busy       | losing 3 | sentence 4 |            |
| can't      | meant    | straight   |            |

## 19. Fifth Grade

|           |           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| answered  | either    | replies   | useful 4  |
| break     | except 3  | since     | wear      |
| country   | half      | stretch   | whom 3    |
| didn't    | isn't     | tear      | without 3 |
| different | perhaps 5 | toward    |           |
| doesn't   | really 5  | trouble 4 |           |

## 20. Sixth Grade

|            |           |             |          |
|------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| certain 6  | laid      | separate    | tries    |
| crowd      | led       | speech 6    | whether  |
| describe 6 | library 4 | stories     | won't    |
| hoping 6   | paid      | studies     | wouldn't |
| hurried    | said      | surprised 4 |          |
| ladies 4   | sense     | thrown 6    |          |

## 21. Seventh Grade

|                |              |             |                   |
|----------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|
| chief 4        | enemy 5      | judgment 7  | principal 5       |
| copied 3       | finally 3    | lies        | probably 7        |
| description 6  | foreign 4    | lying 3     | read (past tense) |
| destroy 4      | generally 7  | necessary 6 | respectfully 5    |
| disagree 5     | government 5 | occurred 0  | seize 7           |
| disappointed 5 | grammar 4    | pretty      | sincerely 5       |

## 22. Eighth Grade

|            |                  |            |             |
|------------|------------------|------------|-------------|
| accept 5   | dollar's worth 0 | Jones's 0  | offered     |
| at last 0  | easily 7         | lady's     | opened      |
| definite 7 | huge 6           | ninth 6    | preferred 6 |
| divide     | immediately 7    | occasion 7 | usually 7   |

## SECTION C

## WORDS COMMONLY MISPELLED IN THE NINTH AND TENTH GRADES

(A few words are repeated from Sections A and B.)

## 23

|                                      |                              |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| dis + satisfied = dissatisfied       | mean + ness = meanness       |
| mis + spell = misspell               | drunken + ness = drunkenness |
| re + commend = recommend             | sudden + ness = suddenness   |
| re + collect = recollect             | per + formance = performance |
| ac + com + modate = accommo-<br>date | former + ly = formerly       |
| com + mit + tee = committee          | critic + ize = criticize     |
|                                      | critic + ism = criticism     |

24. Adjectives in *al*

|                      |                    |                     |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| the principal reason | a practical device | a formal invitation |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|

## 25. Solid Words

|            |              |         |         |
|------------|--------------|---------|---------|
| altogether | wherever     | nowhere | inside  |
| whatever   | nevertheless | apiece  | outside |

26. Two *l*'s in the Adverb

|           |              |                  |              |
|-----------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| finally   | accidentally | practically      | emphatically |
| really    | especially   | enthusiastically | principally  |
| naturally | formally     | grammatically    |              |

## 27. Two Words

|           |         |          |         |
|-----------|---------|----------|---------|
| all right | at last | in spite | in fact |
|-----------|---------|----------|---------|

## 28. Queerly Pronounced

|           |          |           |       |
|-----------|----------|-----------|-------|
| beautiful | marriage | knowledge | aisle |
| carriage  | etc.     | solemn    | women |

## 29. Need All the Letters

|        |           |         |        |
|--------|-----------|---------|--------|
| arctic | fascinate | quarter | corner |
|--------|-----------|---------|--------|

## 30. No Extra Letters

|           |             |         |           |
|-----------|-------------|---------|-----------|
| athletics | translation | smooths | lightning |
| possibly  | obstinate   | afraid  | asks      |

## 31. Single Letters

|         |         |         |           |
|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| apology | imitate | amount  | apartment |
| around  | balance | image   | tenant    |
| arouse  | pastime | imagine | opinion   |

32. *El* Nouns

|       |        |        |       |
|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| angel | nickel | tunnel | level |
|-------|--------|--------|-------|

33. *Ai* Nouns

|         |         |
|---------|---------|
| captain | villain |
|---------|---------|

## 34. Six Literary Words

|          |        |         |               |
|----------|--------|---------|---------------|
| goddess  | nymph  | tragedy | He prophesied |
| shepherd | comedy |         |               |

## 35. Double Letters

|          |         |        |                       |
|----------|---------|--------|-----------------------|
| supplies | address | arrive | He will <i>choose</i> |
| approach |         |        |                       |

36. *Le* Nouns

|            |                  |              |
|------------|------------------|--------------|
| an article | a good principle | a participle |
|------------|------------------|--------------|

37. *Z* sound of single *s*

|          |          |
|----------|----------|
| decision | occasion |
|----------|----------|

38. Single *l*

|          |         |        |
|----------|---------|--------|
| although | already | almost |
|----------|---------|--------|

39. *A* Words

|             |              |                      |
|-------------|--------------|----------------------|
| separate    | descendant   | furnace              |
| separation  | particularly | a stationary engine  |
| preparation | board        | to accept a gift     |
| secretary   | coarse cloth | It doesn't affect me |

40. *E* Words

|          |            |              |                   |
|----------|------------|--------------|-------------------|
| biggest  | despair    | benefit      | buying stationery |
| greatest | repetition | a bad effect |                   |

41. *I* Words

|         |            |             |          |
|---------|------------|-------------|----------|
| similar | privilege  | intelligent | medicine |
| divine  | originally | delicate    | disturb  |

42. *O* Words

lese  
move  
prove

forty  
porch  
prisoner

poisonous  
He chose yesterday  
He has chosen

43. *U* Words

pursuit

accustomed

guard

44. *Ou* Words

rough  
four  
fourteen

though  
thorough  
group

proud  
cloud  
loud

double  
of course not  
a ship's course

## SECTION D

*IE* AND *EI*

45. Always expect *ie* when the syllable has the vowel sound of *piece*, *yield*. There are a great many of these regular words; note especially *believe* and *siege*.

Only four common words are exceptional: *seize*, *weird*, *either*, *neither*; three less common ones are *leisure*, *inveigle*, *obedience*.

46. After *c* comes *ei* (except in *financier*).

47. A long *a* sound (as in *weight*, *vein*) is always *ei*.

48. A long *i* sound is always *ei* (except in *fiery*).

49. Any other sound is usually *ei*: *foreign*, *sovereign*, *counterfeit*. The exceptions are two words ending in *-chief*, *mischief* and *handkerchief*; and the curious trio *friend*, *sieve*, *view*.

50. All the ordinary words and exceptions can be known in a moment by a person who understands the following jingles. The first line in each case gives the general rule, and the other two lines give the exceptions.

(1) *I* before *e* when sound is long *e*.

Except

{ Seize, inveigle, either,  
Weird, leisure, neither.

(2) *Ei* after *c* or when sound is not long *e*.

Except

{ Financier, fiery, and mischief,  
Friend, sieve, view, and kerchief.

51. Use a hyphen in compound adjectives: a two-hour walk, a six-cylinder car, a gray-haired man, an old-fashioned lamp, a neat-looking craft, a flat-roofed shack, that gas-well craze, a three-year-old animal, our long-sought-for sundaes.

## SECTION E

## ABBREVIATIONS AND CONTRACTIONS

52. An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word, usually followed by a period: *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Esq.*, *Messrs.*, *Dr.*, *Jr.*, *Sr.*, *Hon.*, *Rev.*, *Col.*, *Prof.*, *A. B.*, *Ph. D.*, *Co.*, *Dec.*, *Feb.*, *Mass.*, *Ill.*, *D. C.* The period is not used after *Miss*, after numerals like *1st* and *3d*; and after *MS* and *per cent* is not needed.

53. Abbreviations are little needed in theme-writing; whenever a writer is in doubt, he should write out words in full. But certain abbreviations are always used: *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Esq.*, *Messrs.* Others that are proper in the body of a theme or letter are those indicating times or dates, like *a.m.*, *p.m.*, *B.C.*, *A.D.*; and degrees like *M. A.*, *D. D.*, *M. D.* There is no objection to *i.e.* and *e.g.*, or to larger ordinals like *135th*.

54. In addressing envelopes the names of states may be abbreviated; *St.* and *Ave.* may be used, though not if one wishes to be formal. Titles may be abbreviated in addresses if first names or initials are used.

|                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| The Hon. James W. Kelsey | Col. Everitt N. Putnam |
| The Rev. Peter McNichol  | Dr. Josiah Morton      |
| Prof. Norman Blaine Eddy | Supt. John F. Lane     |

It may be correct to use abbreviations in writing to "My dear Dr. Morton" or to write about "Col. Roosevelt," but otherwise the way of safety is to spell out the title in full, especially *Professor*.

55. A contraction is formed by using an apostrophe to show an omitted letter or letters: *aren't*, *doesn't*, *we've*, *she's*.

56. No letter is ever added in forming a contraction: *is not*, *was not*, *does not*, etc., are shortened by simply omitting *o* and inserting the apostrophe—*isn't*, *wasn't*, *doesn't*.

57. *Shall not* and *will not* are irregularly contracted to *shan't* and *won't*.

58. No word is ever an abbreviation and a contraction at the same time—that is, no shortened form is ever marked by *both* an apostrophe and a period.



## DIVISION III—GRAMMAR

59. All sentences are composed of three kinds of material: (1) the verb, (2) the noun-like word or group of words, (3) the modifying word or group of words.

## A. THE VERB

60. The verb is the grammatical core of every sentence; around it is centered the whole structure. For the business of a sentence is to say something, to "predicate"; and only the verb can do this. To be sure, the beauty and meaning of a sentence may be in the modifiers, so that the verb may be in one sense insignificant; but as a matter of word-building it is of prime importance. We cannot analyze other people's sentences, cannot easily make complex sentences of our own, unless we know surely what the principal verb is and how the other parts of the sentence are grouped about it. Ability to recognize the verb of the independent clause is fundamental to all sure knowledge of the sentence.

61. Yet some eleventh-grade students in our high schools are not sure of the difference between a verb and an infinitive, cannot tell certainly whether a group of words contains a verb, cannot tell the difference between a principal and a subordinate clause. College freshmen often show ignorance of this kind when asked about such word-groups as the following:

- (1) Owing to the nature of the internal government of France, the quickest way of arriving at results is to assist everywhere the action of the city authorities.
- (2) Not seeming to realize at all that the inhabitants of Norway do not leave it and go to America, where there is a mild climate and where they may have the same crops with one tenth of the labor.
- (3) A man after my own heart, who, even though he had been roughly treated by fate, remained kind and cheery.
- (4) By letting contracts for ten houses at a time, by buying pipe, cement, and fencing-wire for cash in car-load lots, costs were reduced to one-half of what the individual settler buying at retail would have paid.

If a student can *easily* select the principal verb in the exercises for Division III, he probably is not in much need of grammar review. For in order to meet such a test successfully he must know exactly why infinitives and participles are not verbs, must know instantly why

clauses are subordinate. His knowledge must be prompt and clean-cut.

62. So a mere experiment with verbs may show that some classes do not need review. If a test proves that review is necessary, the attack cannot be made directly upon principal verbs, but must be aimed at verbals, phrases, and clauses. Some classes cannot even begin directly upon verbals, for these infinitives and gerunds cannot be explained by a student who has forgotten the constructions of nouns and adjectives. The conditions in each class determine how far back a review shall begin and how complete it must be.

63. A convenient and time-saving plan is to group all material as suggested in paragraph 60, and to study first the noun-like words or groups—that is, those words that form the subjects and complements of verbs.

## B. NOUN-LIKE WORDS AND GROUPS

64. For review purposes a class may wish to see a table of the constructions of nouns:

### *Nominative:*

- a. Subject—Far below us lay the *lake*.
- b. Predicate nominative—That seemed a queer *remark*.
- c. Of address—*Sir*, you misunderstand me.
- d. Of exclamation—Ye *gods!* it doth amaze me.
- e. Absolute—He stood amazed, his *eyes* popping from their sockets.

### *Objective:*

- a. Object of a verb—Lay your *watch* on the desk.
- b. Indirect object—He showed the *children* his medals.
- c. Objective predicate—This swindle made him a *pauper*.
- d. Retained object—The children were shown the *medals*.
- e. Object of a preposition—Who is that beside the *Colonel?*
- f. Adverbial—It weighs almost a *pound*.

*Appositive:* He imitated the sound—a clucking *noise*.

*Possessive:* Buy five *dollars'* worth.

65. The pronouns are (a) personal—*he, she, it, and they*, with their inflected forms; (b) relative and interrogative—*who, which, what, and that*, with their compound and inflected forms; (c) demonstrative—*this and that*; (d) indefinite—*any, many, each, some, few, etc.*, when used to stand for nouns.

66. The only pronouns that need comment in this review are the relatives and interrogatives, which are used to form subordinate clauses. A subordinate clause is a group of words, containing a subject and verb, that is used like a single word. If a clause is used like a noun, it is called a noun clause (par. 69); if it is used as an adjective or an adverb, it is called an adjective clause (par. 91) or an adverb clause (pars. 92-96).

(a) Relatives that have an antecedent form adjective clauses, and are explained under modifiers. (b) *What* always forms a noun clause. (c) The interrogatives when used in indirect questions form noun clauses: "He asked *who you were*." "Don't you know *which company you belong to*?" For the uses of *it* see page 294.

67. The infinitive is nearly always found in the following:

- a. Subject—*To have been* so late was disgraceful.
- b. Predicate nominative—That seemed *to stagger* him.
- c. Object of a verb—I should have liked *to be* there.
- d. Objective predicate—This danger made him *pause*.
- e. Retained object—We were allowed *to enter*.
- f. "Object of *to*"—I want something *to eat*.

The use in (f) is extremely common, as common as all the other uses combined; it is like a prepositional phrase, and is therefore explained under the modifiers, paragraphs 87-90.

68. The gerund (a verbal noun in *ing*) has the following uses:

- a. Subject—*Having* wealth may not be a blessing.
- b. Predicate nominative—That penitence may have been mere *shamming*.
- c. Object of a verb—Can't you hear the *shouting*?
- d. Object of a preposition—Do you object to my *leaving*?
- e. Adverbial—This is worth *knowing* (explaining the adj. *worth*).

The gerund may occasionally have any of the other noun uses.

69. Noun clauses are used as follows:

- a. Subject—It is now thought *that the germ enters through the tonsils*.
- b. Predicate nominative—Our feeling is *that the flag should be hauled down*. That is *where you fail*.
- c. Object of a verb—Do you think *he can*?
- d. Retained object—We are told *that the supplies are all gone*.

(This is a very common use of noun clauses.)

- e. Object of a preposition—We are ready for *whatever may happen*. I went to *where the spring gushed out*. (Many clauses like the following might be called objects of a preposition: *after the sun had set, before the gong sounded*. But in all similar cases the connecting word should be called a conjunction, and the clause should be called a modifier.)
- f. Appositive—I heard a rumor *that you were going away*.

70. A phrase is a group of words, not containing a subject and verb, that is used like a single word in the sentence: *to be able to lob accurately, thinking about all his kindness to me*. Such phrases may be used as subject, predicate nominative, or object.

71. The student should be cautioned that this definition of "phrase" is loose, and not really grammatical. For in every noun "phrase" there is always one word that is used as a noun; the rest of the "phrase" depends upon this. In "*Thinking about all his kindness made me repent*" *thinking* is really the subject of *made*; it is modified by *about kindness*; *kindness* is modified by *all* and *his*. Hence it is questionable whether this vague use of "noun phrase" may not do more harm than good. This book recommends that "phrases" should be broken up, and that the one word be given as the real subject or object.

72. A "phrase" is a loose heap of words, which can be broken up into its parts; whereas a clause is one complete sentence-like structure that must be explained as a whole.

73. Quotations are grammatically noun clauses used as the object of such verbs as *said, answered, objected, etc.*

74. With verbs and noun-like words we may make statements that are complete, but short and rather bare in meaning and form—of this type: "What they all tell me is that I have been promoted." Sentences can be amplified and varied in form only by using modifiers.

### C. MODIFIERS

75. A word that modifies a noun or pronoun is an adjective: *lofty, smaller, seven, any, the, etc.* An adjective may be placed after the modified word, in an appositive position: "The mountains, *blue* in the distance, loomed before us." An adjective may be used as a predicate nominative (called a "predicate adjective"): "The room was *full* of smoke."

76. Possessives might be called adjectives (because they limit nouns); but since possessive nouns are modified by adjectives, and

since pronouns like *hers* are not adjectives, the possessive forms are called "nouns and pronouns in the possessive case."

77. A word that modifies any part of speech other than a noun or pronoun is an adverb: "went *slowly*," "going *fast*," "going *very fast*," "so *lofty*," "*just* above us," "*about* where we were." These adverbs modify (in the order given) a verb, a verbal, an adverb, an adjective, a preposition, a conjunction. The modifier of an infinitive or a gerund may be either an adjective or an adverb: "to decide *difficultly*," "after running *violently*," "after such *violent* running."

78. Adverbs have a great variety of meanings. Sometimes a long sentence contains no adverbs, while in a short sentence there may be half a dozen: "Come *on over here a little farther* if you're *not already too tired*." Some adverbs are so closely bound up with a verb that they may be called "inseparable": "You are being looked *at*." "It has never been thought *of*." But these are adverbs. Some adverbs ask questions: "*Why* is it?" "*When* can you?" Some words are classified as adverbs because there is nothing else to call them: "*There* is no room." "*Even* a wren will fight." "*Yes*, I will." "*There* is nothing *else* to do." *Not* often appears as part of a solid word in contractions: *hadn't*, *wasn't*. Conversational *well* and *why* are adverbs: "*Why*, I suppose so."

79: One kind of adverb deserves a separate paragraph because it helps to explain phrases and clauses. This is the "modal" or "sentence" adverb, which shows to what extent a statement is true; though often used in a very detached way, it really modifies the verb: "These *may*, *indeed*, never be used at all." "*Possibly*, *however*, he may be honest." "You can *surely* help a little."

80. Participles are verbal forms used like adjectives: "These *glowing* coals will die." "*Being* no longer *needed*, it was discarded." "*Having been caught* red-handed, he had nothing to say." "*Heard* melodies are sweet." "He is like a tree *planted* by the river." However detached and independent a participle may be in meaning, however much it may be connected in our thought with a verb, it is always grammatically the modifier of some noun or pronoun: "*Supposing* that the fisherman—intent as he was upon his fifty-dollar haul of mackerel—would not notice us, *we* tried to slip away."

81. An active participle always shows that the modified word does the action—thus: "the *dancing* children," "a *loving* husband." If we speak of "a *dancing* floor" or "a *bowling* alley," we use gerunds, meaning "a floor for dancing," "an alley for bowling." The gerunds are used just as nouns often are for explaining other nouns: "An *ocean liner*, a *magazine cover*."

82. If every student of rhetoric were aware that his participles must be *attached to the right noun or pronoun*, many unpleasant blunders would be avoided. A wrongly attached participle (called "dangling" or "hanging") may do as much damage in a sentence as a broken rod would do in a machine. (See page 308.)

83. One kind of unattached participle is, however, a regular English idiom—such words as *according to, seeing, considering, including, allowing*, which become a kind of preposition with a noun or a noun clause for an object: "*Considering his big limbs, he is surprisingly weak.*" "He spoke—*allowing* for a clipped cadence that recalled to Copper vague memories of Umballa—in precisely the same offensive accent." *Allowing* does not modify *he*, because "he" is not allowing.

84. Participles are the prominent words in "nominative absolute" constructions. These always consist of a noun or pronoun modified by a participle (sometimes understood), often with a long and important train of attached objects or modifiers. They are inserted in a loose, vague way, but really modify the verb—thus: "My companion saw my embarrassment, and, *the almshouses beyond Shore-ditch just coming in view*, with great good nature and dexterity shifted his conversation." "The almshouses coming" modifies *shifted*, showing "by what means he was able to shift." Absolutes are likely to be poorly managed by amateur writers, are less used than formerly, are usually discouraged by teachers. Yet they are proper as brief phrases referring to weather or time: "*The evening being foggy*, we postponed the picnic"—explaining why we *postponed*.

85. A preposition and its object (some noun or pronoun) form a modifying phrase: "We went all *over town*." "He was standing *near a lightning-rod*." "*What* are we coming to?" If the phrase modifies a noun or pronoun, it is an adjective phrase; otherwise it is an adverb phrase. The object of a preposition may have attached to it a long series of objects and modifiers: "He was spurred on *by finding that another inventor who had a grudge against him was hard at work in the very laboratory where his model stood*." The gerund *finding* has for its object the *that* clause, within which are the two adjective clauses beginning with *who* and *where*.

86. Prepositional phrases often act like modal adverbs. Though they really modify the verb, they are thrown into the sentence very loosely: "This is, *at least*, one reason." "No, *by my faith*, I will not!" "He will *of course* want to see you."

87. The infinitive with *to* is a common modifier of nouns, verbs, verbals, and adjectives: "I have work *to do*." "I went *to see* my

uncle." "We are glad to know that." Since infinitives are defined in all our dictionaries and philological works as "verbal nouns," we explain that *to do* and *to see* are prepositional phrases, that *do* and *see* are the infinitives, the objects of *to*.\*

88. Infinitives often form long modifying word-groups: "I went to see *what the old man had been doing in the cabin while we were straining every nerve to save his garden.*" The infinitive *see* has for its object the *what* clause, within which is the adverbial *while* clause. The modifying infinitive has a wide variety of uses, and is growing increasingly important in our language. Some of the idioms hardly admit of explanation—e. g., "There is, *to be* quite frank with you, a great deal of danger." We can only say that *to be* is a kind of prepositional phrase used like a modal adverb—"for the purpose of being quite frank," "in all frankness."

89. The following pair of prepositional infinitives is worth notice:

{ (1) I looked hard *to find* you.

{ (2) I looked hard for you, only *to find* that you had gone.

In the first sentence the phrase modifies *looked*, showing purpose; but in the second sentence *to find* expresses what was decidedly *not* my purpose. We can only explain in some such way as this: some words are understood; the sentence means "but only with the result of finding that you had gone."

90. We can find out whether an infinitive is a modifier by seeing whether the gerund and a preposition (usually *for*) can be substituted: *easy to see* = *easy for seeing*, *a man to respect* = *a man for being respected*, *astonished to see* = *astonished at seeing*, *afraid to go* = *afraid of going*.

91. (a) Relative pronouns form adjective clauses that modify the antecedent: "Everyone *who pays promptly* will receive a bonus." "All *that I could do* was to look on." (b) The relatives compounded with *ever* usually form a clause that modifies an understood antecedent: "I will give you [the one] *whichever you prefer.*" (This might be called a noun clause, like "whatever you prefer.") (c) The relative always has a construction *within its clause*. No one can be sure of the construction until he has mentally "lifted the clause" out of the sentence: "Choose *whoever is best fitted.*" *Whoever* is not the object of the verb outside the clause, but the subject of the verb inside the clause. (d) A relative is never in apposition. It looks somewhat like an appositive, because it is set alongside a noun or pronoun; but its

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\* See the *International* under *to*: Kittredge and Farley's grammar, page 136; "The Next C. G. N. Report" in the *English Journal* for September, 1919. This is the analysis given by the four greatest grammarians of English—Mätzner, Whitney, Sweet, and Jespersen.

construction is absolutely different; it is always a subject or object or possessive *within the clause*. (e) The person and number are always found *outside of the clause*; they are the same as the person and number of the antecedent. Hence if a relative is the subject of a verb, the verb must be of the form that would fit the antecedent: "One of the strangest things that have ever happened"; "the one of all his works that has attracted most attention." (f) The following are examples of adjective clauses not formed with relatives: The day *when you arrived*, the room *where they slept*, the time *since the place was sold*, during the hour *while traffic was blocked*, the year *that he was born*. But the great majority of adjective clauses are formed by relative pronouns.

92. Adverb clauses may be formed by the relative pronouns compounded with *ever*: "*Whatever you do*, don't consider my interests." "I won't flinch, *whoever challenges me*." These clauses modify the verbs in an indefinite way, meaning "without any regard to anything or anybody."

An adverb clause is usually introduced by a subordinating conjunction: *after, although, as, as if, as though, because, before, but, for, if, since, so, so that, than, that, though, till, unless, until, when, where, whether, while*. (The other kind of conjunctions—"coördinating," like *and, or, neither . . . nor*—join two words or phrases or clauses of the same rank.) This list of subordinating conjunctions is apt to be misleading, for most of the words are frequently used in other ways: *but* is usually a coördinating conjunction, is sometimes a preposition, is sometimes equivalent to "who did not," is sometimes an adverb of degree; the word *that* has a variety of uses. This is simply a list of words that may at times be subordinating conjunctions.

93. The following comments on some of the conjunctions follow the alphabetical order given above: (a) *As* is the most peculiar and unexplainable word of the language in some uses. It is a kind of universal coupling-pin for hooking on words in a way that is not accounted for by regular rules of grammar.

- (1) He appears in Act I *as* a messenger.
- (2) We regarded him *as* an honest man.
- (3) I'm *as* hungry *as* a bear.

In (1) and (2) the nouns might be called a predicate nominative and an objective predicate hooked on by *as*. In (3) the first *as* is an adverb of degree, modifying *hungry*; the second *as* is commonly said to join a clause, the verb of which is understood ("as a bear is"); this remnant of a clause modifies the first *as*. Most of these irregular idioms with *as* can be explained (after a fashion) by supplying the missing part of a make-believe clause: "We cannot now, *as* [people used to do]



formerly, refuse to take part." But usually such analysis is of no value. Note well that *as* is never called a preposition.

(b) *But* is unusual: "There was not a man *but would have died for him*." (c) *For* is often called coördinating, but school writers usually feel the word as a joiner of a modifying clause that gives the reason for the principal statement. (d) *So* has only recently become a conjunction; some teachers still consider it an independent adverb like *then* or *therefore*, and they require a semicolon before it. ("I have whipped him; so [= therefore] he will mind in future.") *So* is the most abused, overused, and altogether tiresome word in modern English. (e) *So that* is the correct compound conjunction to show purpose; *so* alone will not do: "I whipped him, *so that* he would mind in future." *So* and *that* are commonly used as a pair, like *as . . . as*: "We were *so* pleased with their hospitality *that we stayed late*." *So* is an adverb modifying *pleased*; *that* is a conjunction joining a clause which modifies *so*, answering the question "*so* pleased as what?" (f) *Than* joins clauses to words of comparison: "The price was higher *than we had expected*." The larger part of a *than* clause is frequently omitted: "He is more eager than [he is] able." (g) *That* has a variety of uses. It is sometimes used like a *when*: "It was about evening *that we arrived*." It sometimes attaches a clause to an adjective in a most peculiar way: "I am sorry *that you must go*." This is really felt as a noun clause "governed" in some way by the adjective; but may be called adverbial, modifying *am*. (h) *Though*, like *for*, slips from coördinating to subordinating. It is subordinating in "*Though I am young*, I understand." (i) *When* and *where* may join adjective clauses: "the time *when you were sent out of class*"; "a bank *where the thyme grows*." (j) *While* is subordinating in "Hold my horse *while I go in*." (k) The following often join noun clauses: *if, that, when, where, whether*.

94. Occasionally an adverb clause has no conjunction: "I was so happy *I didn't know what to do*." "*The sooner you yield*, the better it will be for you." "They are spoiled now, *however good they may have been yesterday*."

95. We have seen in paragraph 93 some cases of adverb clauses that modified *as, so, and more*. Except for such cases as these, an adverb clause always modifies a verb. An adverb clause frequently comes at the beginning of a sentence, far from the verb it modifies: "*If I had not shouted*, the little child who was so unconcernedly crooning to herself in the middle of the highway *would have been crushed* like a worm."

96. Little interjected (= "thrown in") clauses may cause confusion if they are not clearly understood: "There is, *I suppose*, no other way."

This is just the same kind of indefinite modifier as the modal adverb *possibly*, the infinitive *to be sure*, or the phrase *at least*. These little interjected modifiers are often closely connected in meaning—that is, they are not parenthetical and set off by commas: “They chose a man that *they knew* could resist temptation.” This clause really modifies the verb in the relative clause, as if it were “that could *certainly* resist.” Such clauses are frequent with relatives, and are bound to make trouble in analyzing unless they are “lifted out” before the relative clause is “lifted out.”

#### D. SENTENCES

97. A sentence that contains only one clause is called a simple sentence. There may be two or more subjects and two or more verbs, but only one statement is made; every subject belongs with every verb—for example: “At such a crisis *boys and girls* and *old men can help* in the struggle and *make* their nation stronger.” A simple sentence is “simple” in name only; it may be a long and complicated mass of phrases and verbals: “The will-o’-wisps, laughing and jiggling and complimenting the ladies and eating gold and shaking it from them, I, for my own share, take the liberty of viewing as some shadow of Elegant Culture or modern Fine Literature.”

98. A sentence that contains one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses is called complex.

99. A sentence that contains two or more independent clauses is called compound. Each independent clause may contain subordinate clauses, and may be analyzed as if it were a separate complex sentence; but the sentence as a whole is compound.

#### E. ELLIPSES

100. There are many sentences which would be insoluble mysteries to a person who did not know about omitted words, technically called “ellipses.” Here is a list of the more common kinds:

- (1) I want the one [that] you have.
- (2) [The person] Whoever finds may keep.
- (3) [You] Don’t be too sure.
- (4) (See *as* and *than*, paragraph 93.)
- (5) [I will say] To put it briefly, [that] we have not the cash.
- (6) He slouched against a post, a cigarette [being] in his mouth.
- (7) I spent a week at the Holmeses’ [house].
- (8) Come on if you want to [come].

- (9) Why do I? [I do so] Because I choose to [do so].  
 (10) [That is] No matter. [There is] No harm done.  
 (11) [Understand that this is] Not that I care a hang  
 (12) [Say] No more!  
 (13) [What you say is] All right. I agree.  
 (14) While [we were] standing there, we felt the shock.  
 (15) Fellows [who are] not yet of age are barred.  
 (16) [Do they mean] Us! [That is] Impossible!  
 (17) [That is] Just my luck! Now we're done for.

### EXERCISES

NOTE: Except for very backward classes, a grammar review is more beneficial with miscellaneous sentences. The following list has been carefully selected to furnish material for verbals, phrases, and clauses. Sentences 1-40 contain a great many verbals.

*Some of the numbered groups are not sentences.* A vital requirement in the exercises is to detect these counterfeit "sentences" that have no principal verb.

1. By means of this gun the airman became used to aiming at the target he was to meet at the front, and he was also able to know with what success he shot, and helped forward toward correcting his errors.

2. The new president of China, whose program for settling civil strife includes consolidating of the present opposing factions and developing of Chinese trade through the coöperation of America, England, and Japan.

3. When we came to vote it was decided that my plan was a good deal the best: to sell the old runway—even for a very small price—and earn money to build a new one.

4. To save metal we made suggestions that checked waste in manufacturing bronzes and other unnecessary articles.

5. As he went with her unwillingly, he had blinked up at her to see if she really meant to offer him such indignity as that, and then, seeing no relenting in her tight-shut lips, he had looked back hopefully at Tonio.

6. Through it all there was the quick dropping of dark forms, like twigs loosened and thrown down by the storm's fury.

7. They have formed an association of their own in order to carry on the fight for their right to continue to work in this occupation.

8. After studying this cartoon we can detect two purposes shown by the child with the hatchet—to hack through the leg of the piano and to keep the piano from falling on him.

9. It seems that one comical ambition had possessed the little fellow after reading those Indian stories—"to have his name feared," as Chief Chawbakook used to say solemnly when he proposed going on the war-path to get some more scalps.

10. We were not willing to lose a day by stopping beside one of the water-holes to wait for seals.

11. To think of such a man—with his fiery glow of heart, his swell of feeling, his idealism—is to feel that my present companions are little men.

12. It was thought that he intended to establish a correspondence and obtain goods to sell on commission; but I found afterwards that, through some discontent with his wife's relatives, he purposed to leave her on their hands and never to return again.

13. To make perfectly sure of his honesty—for some of us had begun to suspect him of stealing—and to remove this growing cause of friction in our party.

14. All our hearts aching for the Italy we were leaving, which had been our first home, and which our children had made theirs through hearing us talk about it.

15. His finger on his lips, my companion pointed down to the open water, and, following his gesture, I saw five American mergansers busily engaged in fighting for a living in the cold water.

16. He continued to write frequently, sending me large specimens of an epic poem which he was then composing, and desiring my remarks and corrections.

17. Being extremely methodical and, like all men of his age who have succeeded in amassing great wealth, a slave to habit, he was utterly unable to see the papers lying on his desk without putting a weight on them.

18. Thereafter, during a time so long that no one may even estimate it, certainly for many millions of years, showing not a single trace of any sliding of the strata.

19. Observing my partiality for domestic pets, she lost no opportunity of procuring those most likely to please me.

20. What follows is intended to outline the methods of the committee in creating the first settlement and to explain the benefits already experienced by the settlers.

21. The "Rainbow," relieving five worn-out divisions, drove before them the picked troops of Germany, wrenching from the enemy one skilfully prepared position after another.

22. Master mechanics from all parts of the United States having recently visited his shop to look at his machine for drilling square holes,

and to invite him to visit their shops and demonstrate the working of his apparatus.

23. Owing to this cause—that, being without wife or family, I have not learned to protect myself, and so have got into a way of being careless about money.

24. It is easy enough to talk about “running over to London” next summer, but I want to know what chance there is of getting back.

25. To see, emerging out of the shadow, a barefoot boy, scantily attired, playing softly on a mouth-organ cupped in his small hands.

26. The day was altogether too hot for hoeing weeds, and as I leaned over the rows, with the sweat getting into my eyes, and thought of those other fellows tearing around to make third base, I grew positively unfit to work.

27. It certainly is peculiar—to put it mildly—to see a man sprinting for a trolley instead of waiting thirty seconds to take the car coming along just behind.

28. It now being quite unnecessary—at least it seems to be—to explain that the boy waiting for him at the corner was not his son at all.

29. The better to deceive the servant in attendance, I did this with the assured air of an old and familiar acquaintance.

30. The foolish question, and his grinning way of asking it, always made me laugh.

31. A long series of galleries devoted to paintings, leading through Dutch and Flemish artists to those of France and England, and finally to work by American artists.

32. Oh, simply to feel it in my finger tips and hear it in my ears, with no printed pages between.

33. The four happy beings—two men and two ladies who had just entered the garden and at whom his stare was directed—taking no notice, but following a bowing waiter to a table reserved for them.

34. Only one thing keeps the Mohammedans from resuming their march to conquer the world for Islam—not having any money or scientific knowledge.

35. To expect him to behave like a public servant assured of a fixed income, or like a priest whose church will never let him starve, is ridiculous.

36. After writing to Maggie and being surprised and hurt at receiving no reply, not realizing in the least how his friend might have forgotten to mail the letter.

37. At another time this biplane made a flight over the city, carrying fifteen persons, the largest number ever carried (up to that month) in America.

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38. The battle of socialism is to be fought, not simply at the polls, but at the writing-desk and wherever men meet to talk half an hour.

39. To remove one result of the war by force and to leave the other untouched, thus perpetuating a fearful crime against civilization.

40. Before he had been seated in the parlor five minutes, a pause in the conversation having ensued, observing it was "a gloomy day," and adding, "I suppose Miss Blandy must be hanged by this time."

41. How best to handle the situation created by the refusal of many railroads to accept all the new equipment awarded to them by the Director-General was discussed at a meeting of the standing committee.

42. Johnson's negro servant, Francis Barber, having left him and been some time at sea—not pressed, as has been supposed, but with his own consent—it appears from a letter of Dr. Smollett that Johnson kindly interested himself in procuring a release from a state of life of which he had always expressed the utmost abhorrence.

43. How he can get out of the scrape he has now got himself into is more than I can imagine.

44. Then, reading in his manual as if he had been repeating some pious oration, in the midst of his devotion he lifted up his hand and gave Don Quixote a good blow on the neck, and then a gentle slap on the back with the flat of his sword, still mumbling some words between his teeth in the tone of a prayer.

45. In the arrest of Emilio Cantu, an aged Mexican, who is now held at Brownsville, Texas, by immigration authorities, local secret-service agents admitted they believe there has been solved the mystery of counterfeiting operations extending over a period of eighteen years along the Texas border and amounting to at least \$100,000.

46. Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Murphy, who at that time saw a good deal of Johnson, have told me that they previously talked with him about this matter, and that it was perfectly understood by all parties that the pension was merely honorary.

47. Waster Lunny was a man who had to retrace his steps in telling a story if he tried short cuts, and so my custom was to wait patiently while he delved through the plowed fields that always lay between him and his destination.

48. Three sales were reported yesterday which will lead ultimately to building enterprises, one of them paving the way to the erection of a big theater on Market Street which will require an outlay of approximately \$1,000,000.

49. The poor countryman, trembling for fear, told him that, as he was on the brink of death, and by the oath he had sworn, he did not owe the lad so much.

50. Sympathizers of the striking operators held a mass meeting last night, after which several hundred of them went into the building occupied by the telephone company.

51. In this great commercial country it is natural that a business which produces so much wealth should be considered as very respectable.

52. Remembering that the mud house was near, she groped her way to it, meaning to pass the night there; but at the gate she turned away hastily, hearing from the door the voice of a man she knew to be Nanny's brother.

53. Most of the conductors, when they met with a refusal to pay the second fare, contented themselves with demanding that the recalcitrant one leave the car, but in no instance was the demand acceded to.

54. Having thus addressed the gypsy, who crawled into the low tent on all fours, and after some rummaging and rustling returned with a cash-box, which the man who has spoken opened with a key he wore about his person.

55. No! It cannot be that the mothers and fathers who gave four million sons to die, if need be, that liberty might survive, will now haggle and quibble over the material cost of saving the very soul of civilization.

56. Now that we had returned safely to camp and could see the funny side and laugh and joke over the dangers that had made us mighty serious while we were passing through them.

57. Happening in the midst of these cogitations to raise his hand, he was astonished to find how heavy it seemed, and yet how thin and light it really was.

58. This position not being the most comfortable one he could have chosen for himself, he managed to stagger to his feet, and, holding on by the hook, looked round for his host.

59. To be sure to make up our minds to the sad fact that "if you have no money in the big city, you cannot persuade people to give you a good time."

60. That done, he gave her his arm and escorted her into the house, while several active waiters ran on before as a skirmishing party, to clear the way and to show the room which was ready for their reception.

61. From my point of view—supposing that of course he had had permission—being most unfairly treated by the keeper of the museum.

62. Money wasted in such a way—by paying the stevedores to do just what they would have had to do anyway if he had made no bargain with them.

63. Once, while they were yet at work. the child, seeing that he

often turned and looked uneasily at her, as though he were trying to resolve some painful doubts or collect some scattered thoughts, urged him to tell the reason.

64. The prospect of playing the spy under such delicious circumstances, and of disappointing them all by walking in alive, gave more delight to Marcus than the greatest stroke of good fortune could possibly have inspired him with.

65. As the schoolmaster had already left his room and gone out, she bestirred herself to make it neat and comfortable, and had just finished its arrangement when the kind host returned.

66. Now, it happened that the gentleman, in his anxiety to impress upon Bartow that he was not to tell anybody what had passed between them, followed him out to the door to repeat his caution.

67. An appeal that was almost irresistible, coming as it did from a mother who had known the grief of seeing a son go wrong.

68. Lee stood as one entranced, with his eyes opened wide and fixed upon the ground, regardless alike of the tremulous hold which Mr. Snow maintained on one side of his cravat and of the firmer grasp of Miss Snow upon the other.

69. Also, in connection with certain photographs taken in Somaliland, asserting on oath that the natives had to be paid liberally before they would face the camera.

70. To get up perfectly fresh in the morning, feel like a fighting-cock all day, be wide-awake at night, and, in spite of all the work he has done, to help out a weaker friend in his midnight toil.

71. Scarcely less moved and surprised by the sight of the child than she had been on recognizing him, he stood for a moment silent and confounded by this unexpected apparition, without even the presence of mind to raise her from the ground.

72. The constable, who had been chewing a straw all this while with great philosophy, replied that if they went away at once they would have time enough, but that if they stood shilly-shallying there any longer they must go straight to the lock-up.

73. The afternoon of June 1, about five o'clock, as we were sitting in the tiny wardroom sipping our coffee, the officer who had the watch on deck sent word to the captain that two ships had been sighted.

74. To show that the people actually want what he calls "plain, unvarnished news," telling us of his experience with a daily that was published by the Government to be distributed free of charge.

75. Disencumbering himself of a barrel-organ which he placed upon a chair, and retaining in his hand a small whip wherewith to awe his company of comedians, he came up to the fire to dry himself.



76. When the small boy who admired the Deacon's calf asked how he could get one like it, the Deacon told him he could get one by praying for it.

77. Sometimes walking for a mile or two while her grandfather rode inside, and sometimes even prevailing upon the schoolmaster to take her place and lie down to rest, thus traveling on very happily until they came to a large town, where the wagon stopped, and where they spent a night.

78. I could have told the others how to do that, those others that were just plain serfs without a vestige of the genius for leadership.

79. When Jimmy came to his ball, it was lying in a crack where the sand had sunk a little away from the top one of the stack of railroad ties that formed the side of the trap.

80. It was because she had so completely lost sight of the sergeant that she discovered with such a start the young sailor who sat opposite to her on the rear seat of the bus-top.

81. A statement which can hardly be credited, though it is made on the best authority—namely, that the water-buffalo is almost as deadly as a lion in an encounter.

82. There in the charmed circle under the trees, where none may enter until that hour when some pale, lost mariner shall find the secret of the pathway and wake her from the trance.

83. It would be hopeless to attempt to put into writing those impressions which go to make the entering of a new-found sepulcher so thrilling an experience.

84. To say nothing of the Prince, a young man of earnest mien and stately bearing, who is surrounded by a royal court which even includes a brilliant young English colonel.

85. If you happen to have nothing in particular about which to dictate a memorandum, you dictate a memorandum to some one, saying that you have nothing to suggest or report.

86. It follows that if we desire to keep the fluid in the can, all we have to do is to maintain sufficient partial vacuum above the liquid, regardless of how many holes the can may have.

87. When he had finished, he walked slowly backward from the writing, admiring it as one might contemplate a beautiful picture, but with something of sadness in his voice and manner which quite touched the child, though she was unacquainted with its cause.

88. Our Mongolian hero was a stumpy, middle-aged person about half the size of the American, with a flat and serious face resembling a design punched laboriously into a worn-out pocketbook.

89. After which her heart turned over in her breast and her hands

went suddenly cold, because she knew—as no one else could—what those three whispered words meant to the family.

90. To meet face to face this celestial creature, from whom no secrets could be hidden nor any guilt concealed, was an ordeal to which a man might well look forward with dread.

91. Marie knew that what Margaret meant was that Bill had been neglecting her badly of late, and that she was too proud to make any engagement for him which he might not be interested enough to keep.

92. Through this delirious scene the child, frightened and repelled by all she saw, led on her bewildered charge, clinging close to her conductor, and trembling lest in the press she should be separated from him and left to find her way alone.

93. Seated in the warm sunshine amidst the trees, eating a roast fowl seasoned with onions, or some equally palatable concoction, he seems to have found the life of a shipwrecked mariner by no means as distressing as he had imagined.

94. In the first place, let me say that what we have done in our business any firm can do in theirs, if they have any talents along organization lines.

95. At sight of the strange room and its unaccustomed objects she started up in alarm, wondering how she had been moved from the familiar chamber in which she seemed to have fallen asleep last night, and whither she had been conveyed.

96. To appreciate the meaning of this prayer it is necessary to remember what an important matter it was to an Egyptian that he should be buried in his native city.

97. Then we have among us the lady who loved to go up and down in the land telling us common people what we should do to the Government that despotizes over us.

98. That from this time on we were a prey to the most harassing fears, as we listened with bated breath for the slightest sound which might foretell that our captors were coming again.

99. His laugh was so irresistibly comic that, when he had repeated it several times, the attention of the spectators was so engrossed by his performance that the progress of the play seemed likely to become a secondary object.

100. A single or overhand knot tied in a hanging cord, if it is in the position farthest from the main cord, standing for "yes," and two such knots representing "no."

101. Lennie wondered to see the pony again, so near his own home too, but it never occurred to him for what purpose the pony might have come there, or where the old lady and the old gentleman had gone,

until he lifted the latch of the door, and walking in, found them seated in the room in conversation with his mother.

102. A boy who had entered the Moro village just before I got to my gun-trap, on the morning after the one and only shot, reported that he had seen Moros hastily clearing the road from their houses out toward the main road.

103. I have not the least doubt that at the moment he slid his nickel through the ticket man's window and took out his permit to clear the distance between Fulton and Forty-Second Streets in three jumps, he was one of the three best-looking boys in New York City.

104. The reader who desires to be told of the discovery of buried cities whose streets are paved with gold should take warning before it is too late and return to his novel.

105. Perhaps the best example of this "Choctaw beer," which was brewed on a large scale and at a great profit at Beaumont, by a man who claimed that in exchange for a rifle a Choctaw Indian gave him the formula.

106. He remembered then that he had read that in England there are now such landmarks as well as public landing-fields.

107. A student who entered the philosopher's study found him pounding a typewriter, and was utterly paralyzed to discover that its characters were ancient Greek and that the great man was nonchalantly dashing off a letter in that language.

108. There was something terrific about the lights, the vast and gorgeous shapes of them, the indescribable variety of their coloring, their swift transitions, their weird, pictorial effect.

109. As we held our electric lamp above the mummies of the king and his wife, and while we looked down into their quiet faces, there was almost the feeling that they would presently open their eyes and blink at the light.

110. The author devotes nineteen pages of his book to tables showing the many items of food discovered in the stomachs of the ducks and the exact number of stomachs in which each particular kind of food was found.

111. Darkest Mexico was penetrated on March 29 from Laredo by a train of Pullman cars carrying fifty members of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce and bound for the principal cities of the country so long rent and ravaged by revolutionary bands.

112. As we lived in constant preparation for a friend who might come in any evening, it required some contrivance to keep our two candles of the same length, ready to be lighted, and to look as if we burned two always.

113. When we had done with the porters and had spoken with the custom-house officers, who directed us to the Hotel d' Angleterre, where a valet-de-place came to offer his services and spoke to me ten minutes before I found out that he was speaking English.

114. However, as the sun had baked my two jars very hard, and as I lifted them up very gently and set them in the soft packing in my two wicker baskets.

115. A letter from his grandfather (who was more cruel than ever, now that there was a boy to be guarded from the snares of the world), describing the various sins into which men might fall, until I wondered how any man ever came to a natural death.

116. Now that we are taking inventory and trying to balance some of the gains against the immense losses of these four years, to find how important the victory really has been for the United States.

117. With an income of \$200,000 a year from oil wells sunk in its churchyard, all used for religious purposes, the Baptist Church of Ranger, having refused \$1,000,000 for the right to develop wells in its adjoining graveyard.

118. Passing on then to a discussion of the fighting qualities of the French Premier, the writer expresses doubt whether, in spite of his being called the "Tiger," the Frenchman ranks as the best fighter of the assembled peacemakers.

119. Covering this heavy frame with skins, the hair upwards, so that it cast off the rain like a roof, and kept off the sun so effectually that I could walk out in the hottest weather with more comfort than I could before in the coolest.

120. In this fearful state of things, distracted by the sudden appearance of the dog and fascinated by the eyes of the preacher, the miserable Peter sat bolt upright, wholly incapable of motion, strongly disposed to cry, but afraid to do so, and returning his pastor's gaze until his infant eyes seemed starting from their sockets.

121. Then the habit of reasoning, which gets people into trouble as likely as not, asserted itself and told Steve that on one of those darker cross-streets he might find a place where he could eat for half a dollar.

122. He told me he was more terrified than ever he was before, all the time my father was speaking.

123. Being with a party at Versailles, viewing the waterworks, a dispute between the two gentlemen whether the distance from where they stood to one of the little islands was within the compass of a leap.

124. A letter I had from him the other day says that though he has felt no symptoms of hay-fever yet, he expects to begin sneezing as soon as the first blossom is out.

125. How Marshal Pétain of the French Army ducked the time-clock to witness a ball game is the story brought back to this country by the manager of the Dubuque team, who has returned after spending six months as a K. of C. Secretary.

126. On the top of this, resting on three wooden prongs, was a small copper dish, in which were the ashes of incense, and the little stick used for stirring them.

127. Although this might have been a very comical thing to look at from a secure gallery, as a house on fire is better than a play to people who don't live near it, there was something in the earnestness of Bronson's manner which made his legal adviser feel that the counting-house was a little too small.

128. The black bottom of a shell-hole and the black entrance to a subterranean gallery being now as distinct to the aerial observers as to the infantrymen who charged across them.

129. It was almost impossible to believe, and quite impossible to realize, that we were standing where no man had stood for well over three thousand years.

130. Instead of speaking, however, she sat looking at the visitor for a long time in silence, and then getting up, brought out from a corner a large roll of canvas about a yard in width, which she laid upon the floor and spread open with her foot until it nearly reached from one end of the wagon to the other.

131. So I applied the torch with my own hands on a score of horrible Mondays, desisting only when another submerged victim of the ruling classes suggested that even if the old thing did burn they probably wouldn't stop school.

132. With the certain expansion of world trade and with the tremendous additional advantages to be provided by the new Inner Harbor and Industrial Canal, New Orleans may confidently anticipate, not only a return to her former position among the nation's great ports, but a new industrial growth surpassing the hopes of the most optimistic.

133. When Peggy came in, tottering under the weight of the teatray, I noticed that Miss Barker was sadly afraid lest Peggy should not keep her distance sufficiently.

134. It was almost worth saving her just to be able to say that now I guessed she would see I wasn't to be imposed on any longer, and that if she behaved herself I might take her to the Far West with me.

135. Some difference of opinion having arisen with Lord Harrington respecting the depth of a pond, Goldsmith remarked that it was not so deep that, if anything valuable was to be found at the bottom, he would hesitate to pick it up.

136. When his lordship, after some banter, threw in a guinea, Goldsmith, not to be outdone in this kind of bravado, in attempting to fulfil his promise without getting wet, accidentally fell in.

137. A native who was attempting recently to discover hidden treasure in a certain part of the desert sacrificed a lamb each night above the spot where he believed the treasure to lie, in order to propitiate the *djin* who guarded it.

138. But Clingham put socialism in the background, mounted a dry-goods box, started what is known in one profession as the "ginger-up," and when his audience had been properly tuned up, "sold" them a scheme of finance and government that must be nearly as old as the Ohio River.

139. At the height of the autumn panic, when the press was filled with dire forebodings and the ignorant layman was frightened out of his wits, securities began to rise because the Stock Exchange saw that the worst was over.

140. How necessary this classification of eggs is may be seen when one realizes that practically the whole enormous business is conducted by telegraph and that the dealer who purchases a carload of eggs has no opportunity to examine them until they arrive.

141. Although the oyster is not a desirable article of food when spawning, yet, as the time of spawning differs in various localities, no elimination of certain months can insure against their use when they are in that condition.

142. When he had given her this information, and a tin porringer containing her breakfast, the man locked her up again, and went clattering along the stone passage, opening and shutting a great many other doors, and raising numberless loud echoes which resounded through the building for a long time, as if they were in prison too, and unable to get out.

143. From the timber to the open range he journeyed, and on across valleys and uplands and hills, until he came to a fir-rimmed meadow in that pass in the mountains from which a man may ride westward into Nevada or north into Idaho or down over the old trail that leads into Wyoming.

144. It was probably at the close of this story that the officious Boswell, ever anxious to promote conversation for the benefit of his notebook, started the question whether dueling were consistent with moral duty.

145. The farmer speculates when he fertilizes his land, again when he plants his seed, and again when he sells his crop for future delivery, as he frequently does, before it is planted or before it has matured.

146. For fifteen minutes after the Lincoln went down we busied ourselves tying together rafts and boats in order that they might not be scattered over the ocean, and so that the survivors could be easily and quickly picked up by the rescuing vessels when they should arrive on the scene.

147. I suppose he thought we could find our way to the circle that had gathered around the fire, which reminded me—I don't know why—of the Druid ring of Stonehenge.

148. The tea plant is again cut down to about 24 inches three months before gathering, the object being to make the bush spread and to stimulate the fullest possible growth of the "flushes," or young shoots, which furnish the tender new leaves desired.

149. He was the kind of man who, if given the job of running any kind of a business, would find how other people ran the same kind of business, and, having made his analysis, would go cheerfully to work and run the business successfully.

150. He never sat in the same position for two minutes together, but was perpetually tossing his arms and legs about, pulling up the sashes and letting them violently down, or thrusting his head out of one window to draw it in again and thrust it out of the other.

151. The melon thistle, also called "Turk's cap," a small pear-like fruit of a cactus, which is in many cases edible, and which is eagerly sought by cattle when there is a drought.

152. The bundle that he was kicking about proved to be an expensive masquerade dress, which he said he had been fool enough to purchase, and, as there was no other way of getting the worth of his money, he was trying to take it out in exercise.

153. I have said it was not surprising that the public failed to observe signs of disturbances in the happy conditions that seem to prevail before the panic began.

154. If it had not been that this man and his wife were such decent, quiet people, Mrs. Roberts could almost have thought he was a mountebank, because he had a great box in the cart, full of she did not know what.

155. One of these caves, which was the largest and driest and had a door out beyond my wall—that is, beyond where my wall joined to the rock—was all filled up with large earthen pots, which would hold five or six bushels each.

156. Though mushrooms have been cultivated for at least two thousand years and have been for generations raised in enormous quantities in France, Russia, and Australia, it is only within recent years that information concerning their growth has been obtainable here.

157. If it is true, as the old gardener declared, that an asparagus bed will continue to produce for a century, why are you people so set upon plowing up what you planted only four years ago?

158. In the work of men like Galsworthy, Drinkwater, and others there is hope that out of modern life may rise a noble school that will restore to the theater its dignity and to dramatic literature something of the glory that crowned it in Elizabethan times.

159. A New York correspondent who was present describes the event, and in so doing draws a picture of a typical Prussian who apparently has lost none of his interesting little Prussian ways in spite of all that's happened.

160. So, after going a little out of their way to see Doris and her mother safe to a friend's house where they were to pass the night, Stoner and his mother left them at the door, with an early appointment for returning to Greenbrier next morning:

161. The intense curiosity to know what was beyond, and, at the same time, the feeling that it was a desecration to climb into those halls which had stood silent for unnumbered centuries.

162. Though we are repeatedly told that men are needed in every trade, we now learn that thousands of men are going to be set to digging their way under the Channel to France because there is nothing else they can do.

163. In addition to other developments, a new medical station was established at Toeren, and leper colony buildings were commenced at Lombok, the officers in charge being quartered in what was formerly one of the residences of the Lombok King.

164. Teaching the ignorant and the downtrodden that all men are created equal, with certain inalienable rights, and dispelling the clouds of superstition is one of the things the Salvation Army does best.

165. After this Japanese city had imported a fire engine, which proved very useful on several occasions, the carpenters got up a petition to the government to send the engine away, *because it ruined their business!*

166. That syndicalism is totally impracticable, not working as it is expected to work, not producing any of the results which were promised from it, is a statement that this labor delegate from France makes unequivocally.

167. He was smiling a little to himself as he approached the doorway of the building that sheltered his offices—a smile that made his face even more than ordinarily bear out that description once given by a newspaper writer who liked phrase-making: “the face of a wise and tolerant priest, with the eyes of a shrewd Puritan.”



## DIVISION IV—PUNCTUATION

## GROUP A

## OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE

101. RULE. Complete statements end with a period or a semicolon.

- (1) I deny it. You've never seen him.
- (2) Let's eat here; there's running water close by.
- (3) He is mistaken; at least I think he is.

Use a period to show more complete separation of thoughts; the writer of (1) wanted the two statements to stand out as of independent importance. Use a semicolon between statements which, though grammatically independent, are closely connected in thought; the writer of (2) shows that his second independent clause gives the reason for his first; either one could stand alone so far as *grammar* is concerned, but the semicolon shows that in *meaning* they are not independent of each other. The difference is entirely one of degree, is a matter of the author's choice.

a. Rule 101 is of more importance than all the other rules combined. It is the necessary foundation for all the others. Until a student can always recognize—and show by the right mark that he recognizes—the end of an independent statement or question, he has not begun to learn punctuation; he has not begun to learn composition.

b. Certain very common adverbs are always used to introduce independent statements, and must therefore always have a semicolon or a period before them. To use a mere little weak comma is to show ignorance of the simplest principle of composition. The commonest of these adverbs is *then*.

At first we were frightened; *then* we saw the humor of it.

*Then* causes a greater number of serious blunders than any other adverb. Two more death-dealing adverbs are *however* and *nevertheless*.

This looks bad; *however*, we needn't despair.

He was nearly asleep; *nevertheless* he refused our coffee.

c. These adverbs slip in so innocently as thought-connectors that we easily forget that they are not grammatical joiners—not “conjunctions.” When they begin a statement, they must invariably have a semicolon or a period before them. Other tricky adverbs and adverbial phrases of the same kind are here shown.

- (1) It's only fourteen miles to Kearney; *there* we can stock up.
- (2) Hurry up; *now* is the time.
- (3) He knew the law; *accordingly* he must be punished.
- (4) His time is up; *consequently* he must sit down.
- (5) They were doubtful; *indeed* they were utterly skeptical.
- (6) It was an imitation pearl; *moreover* it was a poor imitation.
- (7) We suppose so; *still* we are not certain.
- (8) You must remember that; *otherwise* you will seem ill-bred.
- (9) I am already in debt; *hence* I must not borrow.
- (10) The speck grew larger; *finally* we saw the pennant.
- (11) Such an action is rude; *also* it costs money.

It is also best to beware of *therefore*, considering it always an independent adverb.

d. The only exception to Rule 101, the first and greatest law of punctuation, is seen in the following example:

That's enough, isn't it?

Students should note well that this is a peculiar and exceptional case. It applies only to this form of "echo question." Otherwise a semicolon or a dash or a period must stand between a statement and a question.

**102. RULE. A question ends with a question mark.**

Why is it necessary, after all the precaution the doctor has taken—and you know as well as I that he always errs on the side of safety—to continue this bothersome quarantine?

A high-school student may know Rule 102 as well as his teacher does, yet by the time he has reached the end of a long question he is very likely to forget that he *has asked why* it is necessary; his mind has been thinking about *that fact* of a bothersome quarantine, and so he is likely to put down a period.

**103. RULE. No question mark should stand after an indirect question.**

He asked us very sharply what we were doing.

**104. RULE. An exclamatory sentence ends with an exclamation mark.**

- (1) What a celebration there will be when it's all over!
- (2) How does he dare insult us so!

The writer of (2) shows that no answer is expected, but that the speaker is expressing strong indignation.

**105. RULE.** The exclamation mark is used at the points where emotion is to be shown.

Oh, if only he were here!

Ouch! It hurts!

What! You don't know?

A small letter after such exclamation marks is more common than a capital and is quite proper, unless the interjection is an ellipsis for a whole sentence, like "Steady!" under Rule 111, b.

**106. RULE.** In a series of unconnected items of the same kind and of equal importance commas should separate the items.

- (1) It was kept in a deep, dark, cold cellar.
- (2) They pleaded, whined, groveled in vain.
- (3) China, furniture, draperies, paintings—all were destroyed.
- (4) Down into the basement, all through the halls, up into the attic poured the smoke.
- (5) A billion a year is wasted in such petty vices as chewing gum and drinking soda-water, chewing and snuffing tobacco, drinking tea and coffee.

Notice that the commas separate the items, that there is no comma after the last item.

**107. RULE.** Use a comma before a conjunction that means "but."

- (1) I like him, *but* I am afraid of him.
- (2) I'm in a hurry, *but* not such a fearful hurry.
- (3) The value is less, *yet* the price is higher.
- (4) She agreed, *though* she dreaded the effect.
- (5) Hearn was doubtful, *while* his partner had rosy hopes.
- (6) Of course I enjoy it, *only* I don't dare say so.

For some mysterious reason students are usually heedless of this perfectly easy and necessary requirement: Put a comma before a "but" word.

Note: This Rule speaks only of *but* used as a conjunction, adding a clause or the equivalent of a clause. In its other uses it requires no comma.

No one *but* me could hear him.

You have *but* to whisper if you need me.

Here is a useful *but* inexpensive present.

**108. RULE.** Use a comma before *as*, *for*, and *since* when they add a reason.

I had to quit, *as* I was out of breath.

Gaines refused, *for* he knew what the next step would be.

Let's join him, *since* he seems so lonesome.

It would seem that any intelligent person over fifteen years of age might readily form the simple habit of always putting a comma before *as*, *for*, and *since* that give a reason. But if the hand has for six years been used to racing along without any comma, it dislikes to stop. It forgets the new requirement with amazing ease. Hands must be slowed up.

Note: When a sentence begins with *as*, *for*, or *since*, the comma after the clause is even more necessary.

As my ink gave out, I have had to finish with a pencil.

**109. RULE.** A comma must be used before *so*, *and so*, or *so that* which shows result.

There was no one there, *so* [as a result] I went away.

He was impudent, *and so* I gave him nothing.

The ledger had been destroyed, *so that* [as a result] the auditor was helpless.

Note: A semicolon is preferable before *so*.

**110. RULE.** Use a comma before *and*, *or*, and *nor* joining the two parts of a compound sentence.

Macdonwald was supplied with a great lot of kerns and gallow-glasses, *and* fortune seemed to smile on him.

You must follow orders strictly, *or* you will be demerited.

I shall not see him, *nor* will I permit you to see him.

Comment: Newspapers are not careful about this rule, and a few weeklies do not observe it if the clauses are short and similar. They argue that the two clauses are two coördinate items and need not be split apart by a comma. This reasoning would be justified if a reader could always see at a glance that *and* is joining two clauses. But in the great majority of cases the eye does not see instantly.

He communicates mostly by letter and personal contact, which permits the easy exchange of ideas, *is* lacking.

I am poor at remembering a vocabulary and looking up words often takes some time.

He left all his money to Tom and Bill did not receive a cent.

In all sentences of this type there is a moment's hesitation to discover what *and* is joining. Nine out of ten such sentences in school themes are made more readable by the comma. Hence experienced teachers find it best to require the comma in all such sentences, and they

are right in considering the rule one of the most useful that they teach. Almost all textbooks and college instructors enforce the rule. The comma is needed before *and finally*, *and then*, *and therefore*, etc., even when *and* is joining two verbs in a simple sentence.

He peered in for a minute, *and then* retired.

**111. RULE.** Use a comma before and after the words that introduce a direct quotation, unless some other mark has to be used.

- (1) "You are very good," she said.
- (2) He cried out querulously, "Why can't I?"
- (3) "At last," said Brooks, "we know what real bravery is."
- (4) "Can't you find it?" yelled Corbin.

Notice that in (3) *we* begins with a small letter. Notice that in (4) there is no comma with the question mark; nor is one used with an exclamation mark.

(See Rules 137 and 139 for a quotation within a quotation.)

Note: No commas should be used for mere quoted expressions like the one in the following:

It wasn't fair to say that we "shirk like donkeys."

a. Rule 101 says that independent statements must be separated by a semicolon or a period. That rule is hard for some students to apply in writing quotations. It must always be applied. A writer must be specially wary to see whether his character is speaking one sentence before the "he said" and another sentence after those words. If so, a semicolon or a period must be used.

"Come along," called Whitney. "The road is safe."

"I can't," he said; "it's too bitter."

"Won't you hurry?" pleaded Agnes. "We're late already."

b. Exclamatory expressions are often abbreviated sentences and must be followed by capitals. In the following sentence the Captain really spoke two sentences:

"Steady!" roared the Captain. "There's no danger."

c. The two-sentence quotations with introductory words between, like those described in paragraphs a and b, are the ones that betray students into gross error more often than any other combination of words. The paragraphs should therefore be reread with closest attention.

d. Quotations are sometimes introduced by independent sentences. To use a comma before the following quotation would cause a sentence-error.

A frowsy old man came out and greeted the doctor. "Well, Doc, I'm awfully sorry to see you've broken down."

112. Incredible as it sounds, it is true that some high-school writers will occasionally place a comma at the beginning of a line. This curious blunder is here prominently announced; a whole paragraph is devoted to it.

113. **RULE.** A comma, semicolon, colon, or period is never allowed to stand at the beginning of a line.

If the introductory words of a quotation run just to the end of a line, put the comma there and put the quotation marks at the beginning of the next line.

## GROUP B

### MINOR USES OF THE COMMA

114. **RULE.** A comma should be placed after *yes* and *no*.

Yes, he is. No, I'm not sure.

Comment on "set off": From here on the expression "set off" will be frequently used. This means that a word or phrase or clause is separated from the rest of the sentence by a pair of commas or dashes.

The next reason, however, is much stronger.

Of course if the words to be set off come first in the sentence, there will be only one comma after them; and if they come last in the sentence, there will be only the one comma before them. But it is easier and safer to think of such words as "set off" on both sides. They will always be spoken of so in the following rules and comments.

115. **RULE.** Set off nouns used in address.

Can't you see, my dear sir, that she's frightened?

Harris, what's wrong in number seven?

Lay on, Macduff.

116. **RULE.** In writing dates set off the year after the month.

On June 7th, 1869, he started overland.

117. **RULE.** Numerals are not separated from the nouns or abbreviations to which they belong.

in the year 37 B.C.

at 11.40 a.m.

at 107 Norcross St.

in the year 1907.

**118. RULE.** Set off the name of a state or county following the name of a town or city.

At Clifton Forge, Alleghany Co., Virginia, we changed for Warm Springs.

**119. RULE.** Nouns and pronouns in apposition are set off.

This ring, a *gift* from his uncle, he prized very highly.

It's a pretty picture, *that* of the sky.

Orville F. Platt, Ph. D., will give the course.

Note: But in some cases if an appositive noun explains very closely, it is not set off.

my cousin Alfred  
Ambassador Hill  
the word *peace*

you yourselves  
his friend Oscar

## GROUP C

### NON-RESTRICTIVE MODIFIERS

The comment in Group C is arranged (except for Rule 121) to lead up to the rules.

a. Modifiers—whether adjective or adverb, whether word or phrase or clause—usually limit the modified word rather closely; they are said to be “restrictive in meaning,” and so are not separated by commas.

The *black* trunk is not here.

The trunk *with the three straps* is not here.

The trunk *that I used last summer* is not here.

He ate *rapidly*.

He ate *in a great hurry*.

He ate *after the rest of us were through*.

b. But when modifiers do not limit closely, when they are non-restrictive, they must be separated by commas.

Larry, indignant at the scolding, threw down his shovel.

Then Arvin, wondering deeply, closed his eyes.

The Cyclops, who was now in good humor, told all about himself.

c. The subject of “non-restrictive” is made a Group by itself because of its peculiarity and difficulty. It is not a matter of certain words or certain constructions, but entirely a matter of meaning. A writer always has to decide whether his modifier closely limits the mean-

ing. If it does not, but is said as some kind of side-remark, it is non-restrictive and must be set off. With that general statement for an introduction we may take up particular cases and explain each one.

d. There are some common adverbs that qualify a whole statement, showing to what extent it is true: *probably, possibly, perhaps, indeed, surely, nevertheless*. Some prepositional phrases are commonly used in the same way: *of course, at least, in fact*. And very brief independent clauses are sometimes similarly used: *you know, we think, I suppose, it is said*. Modifiers of this kind are not set off when they restrict the meaning.

The Spaniards were *indeed* fortunate.

It could not *possibly* happen.

*Of course* you will be welcome.

He had a diamond which *he knew* was worth \$10,000.

So there can never be any rule saying that *perhaps* or *in fact* or *we suppose*, etc., must be set off.

120. The RULE is: Set off adverbs, phrases, and clauses if they are non-restrictive in meaning, as in the following examples.

- (1) It was decided, *nevertheless*, to keep on.
- (2) There has never been, *possibly*, a greater event in history.
- (3) The population is said, *indeed*, to be even larger.
- (4) We must remember, *to be sure*, that our share is small.
- (5) In the long run, *of course*, we shall come out even.
- (6) You don't recall, *I suppose*, that you were not sent for.

121. RULE. The following words, when used as shown in the examples below, are always non-restrictive: *however, though, etc., for example, that is, for instance, namely, second*, and other such introducing or numbering words.

[For an explanation of the dashes in the following sentences see Rule 149, b.]

- (1) *However*, we may not be able.
- (2) It won't do, *though*, to show our fear.
- (3) Rats, mice, rabbits, *etc.*, are called "rodents."
- (4) *For example*, consider the duties of a postman.
- (5) He earns a large salary—*that is*, large for a bookkeeper.
- (6) *For instance*, reporters used to live without the word "nearby."
- (7) I have another temptation—*namely*, to apply for a commission in the M. I. D.



- (8) There were three possibilities: *first*, to remove the causes; *second*, to treat it as criminal; *third*, to comply with it as necessary.

a. A participle may point out that particular person or thing that is meant, and so may be restrictive.

The girl *standing* at the window is the one I mean.  
 A man *running* after his own hat is a comical sight.  
 A pencil *sharpened* too finely will break.

These participles mean "that particular girl who is standing," "a man in that kind of situation," "a pencil of that particular shape."

b. But a great many participles modify only loosely and may be far away from the modified word.

Then Miss Sartor, *standing* up in the car, waved her flag.  
*Thinking* the noise was overhead, he started up the stairs.  
 He sat silent for a time, *gazing* at the great panorama.

The above participles do not mean "that particular" or "that kind"; they are decidedly non-restrictive.

**122. RULE. Set off non-restrictive participles.**

A very non-restrictive use of a participle is to form, with a noun or a pronoun, a "nominative absolute," like the following phrases:

Soon after, *the fog having lifted*, we tried again.  
*Our time being short*, we did not visit the museum.

**123. RULE. Set off nominative absolute phrases.**

Prepositional phrases are sometimes not restrictive.

Mr. Barton, *after* long reflection, gave us a quarter.  
 The dance, *like* the vacation, is always eagerly anticipated.

The preposition *with* is the one most likely to be non-restrictive, because it so often forms an indefinite or detached modifier.

The Indians, *with* their usual cunning, lay still.  
 Here was a huge field of cantelopes, *with* cactus planted around the edges.  
 He ordered a planked steak, *with* frozen pudding for dessert.

These sentences do not mean "Indians with cunning," or "cantelopes with cactus," or "steak with pudding"; the phrases are non-restrictive.

**124. RULE. Set off non-restrictive prepositional phrases.**

An infinitive of purpose is really a prepositional phrase, and is always restrictive.

I went to his office *to see* [= "for seeing"] if he was there.

But one common infinitive phrase of a similar appearance is decidedly *not* a phrase of purpose and is *not* restrictive. (See page 522.)

I arrived at the doctor's office, *only to find* him occupied.

Bertrand was let out, *only to be* imprisoned again.

**125. RULE. Set off non-restrictive infinitives.**

A relative pronoun is restrictive if it means "that particular person who" or "that particular thing which."

The men *who subscribe first* will receive a premium.

The letter *that I gave you to mail* is still in your pocket.

The chief *whom they feared most* was Geronimo.

Or a relative may mean "that particular kind of."

This is a valuable invention for all men *who have to work outdoors*.

Lincoln was a man *who cared nothing for mere appearances*.

A carburetor is a device *which mixes the vapor and the air*.

But the following relatives mean something very different; they are equivalent to "and I will add by the way."

Col. House, *who is his particular adviser*, is now ill.

He did not know the countersign, *which was "Peekskill."*

I pulled out my watch, *of which I was very proud*.

It would be nonsense to talk of "that particular Col. House who," because the writer is thinking of only one. It would be absurd to speak of "that particular countersign which was," because a camp has only one countersign. A writer would be most unlikely to mean "that particular watch of which he was proud," because that would signify that he kept in his pockets all those other watches of which he was not proud. In each sentence the clause must be set off. It is easy to see how non-restrictive the following clauses are:

a. You close your visit to the Zoo by passing through the reptile house, *which to many timid people is a terror*.

b. I have a grudge against her husband, *who is a sailor*.

Without the commas the clauses would mean "but you don't go into all those other reptile houses which never scare anybody"; "but I have no hard feelings against all her other husbands."

**126. RULE. Set off non-restrictive relatives.**

In the following sentences are examples of adverb clauses which clearly mean "that particular" time, place, or reason.

- (1) I shuddered *when I heard that bell*.
- (2) The cave is about fifteen feet wide *where this passage branches off*.
- (3) One arm goes up *while the other is coming down*.
- (4) We left *just as they were entering*.
- (5) Never use a comma *because you "kind of feel" the need of one*.

a. The following sentences contain examples of the same conjunctions adding clauses that do *not* mean "that particular." For example, in the first sentence the Moors were not fighting "at that particular time when they ran away"; they were fighting valiantly, *and then* they fled.

- (1) The Moors fought valiantly until their two leaders were slain, *when they gave way and fled for the rear guard*.
- (2) The following summer he visited Moscow, *where he had never been before*.
- (3) On weekdays I have to get up at seven, *while on Sunday I can sleep till eight*.
- (4) This is false, *as you may see if you look on page 627*.
- (5) Don't eat green bananas, *because they are fearfully indigestible*.

b. Some common non-restrictive adverb clauses do not begin with a conjunction.

We must have meat, *whatever the price may be*.  
 You ought never to scream again, *no matter what happens*.  
 He was bound to blunder, *however simple the problem was*.

#### 127. RULE. Set off non-restrictive adverb clauses.

Just as nouns used as subjects or objects are not separated from the verb by a comma, so noun clauses should not be separated.

*His ignorance* was evident.  
*Where you have been since nine o'clock* is evident.  
*These old clothes* I shall give away.  
*Whatever is in the least worn* I shall give away.

Even noun clauses in apposition should seldom be set off.

The feeling *that he was untrustworthy* was thus intensified.

The rare case would be some purely explanatory clause that could be set between dashes or parentheses.

**128. RULE.** Noun clauses are rarely to be set off.

## GROUP D

### LESS COMMON AND LESS IMPORTANT POINTS

**129. RULE.** In a series of three or more items where only the last two are joined by *and* or *or* a comma is required before the conjunction.

This rule used to be stated in the opposite way, and it is not observed by a few of the periodicals. But most periodicals obey the rule, and all manuals of punctuation insist upon it.

Regulars, militiamen, and marines were massed together.

**130. RULE.** The comma is not used before *and Co.*

**131. RULE.** Adjectives in a series are not separated if they are not coordinate in value—i. e., if each one modifies the whole group that follows.

*a funny little incident*

*one hot July day*

*five precious old musty manuscripts*

**132. RULE.** It is still customary to put a comma after every introductory adverb clause, even if it is restrictive in meaning.

When you have had enough, pass the dipper to me.

The Rule says "still" customary because the custom seems to be dying, though the manuals favor it. The comma is really unnecessary—or even objectionable—after a brief restrictive modifier within a subordinate clause, like the following:

We knew that *when he came in* he would look at the clock.

When you consider that *if he leaves* there will be a strike, you are willing to give him his way.

**133. RULE.** It is customary, and useful, to set off conversational *well*, *why*, and *now*.

"*Well*, perhaps so. *Why*, it's wrong. *Now*, will you?"

**134. RULE.** A comma should not be used after an introductory prepositional phrase unless a writer wishes to show that the phrase is distinctly parenthetical.

The following phrases are not set off on a page of the *Outlook* :

*Of this commission Van Hise was made chairman.  
To his ability as a writer Mr. Leupp added, etc.  
During the last days of that particular session of Congress hundreds of measures had been crowded, etc.*

But a very brief and restrictive clause on the same page is set off.

*When he went to Washington, the members, etc.*

**135. RULE.** Clauses of comparison like the following are considered closely restrictive.

*I was so glad to find him safe and sound that I cried.  
I was as bored by his long-winded narrative about trapping muskrats as he was delighted by telling it.  
You are more in love with this place during the glowing warmth of September than you will be in November.*

**136. RULE.** It is better not to put commas at the ends of lines in addressing an envelope or in writing the heading of a letter.

**137. RULE.** A quotation inside a quotation is surrounded by single marks.

*"If," said he, "a man declares, 'There is no use in trying,' I kick him out of my shop."*

**138. RULE.** If an interrogative sentence ends with a quotation that does not contain the interrogative words, the question mark belongs after the quotation marks. The same principle applies to an exclamatory sentence.

*Didn't he say, "We will never answer"?*

**139. RULE.** If two questions end with the same word, only the first question mark is used.

*"Did I hear you say, 'Shall you?'" asked Percival.*

## GROUP E

### MINOR USES OF THE SEMICOLON

**140. RULE.** If the items of a series contain commas, the items should be separated by semicolons.

*I grew to know something of his beginnings—of his mother, who had been a school-teacher; of his father, a small job-master at Kirby Moors; of the examinations he had passed and of their exceeding difficulty.*

**141. RULE.** In a series of three or more clauses a semicolon is often useful to show the two chief members of the sentence.

He was in reality very shy, and it was a great mistake to feel ill at ease; because he was not only uncritical, but delighted in anyone who would talk to him frankly and easily.

**142. RULE.** A semicolon may be used before relatives and subordinating conjunctions, or after *yes* and *no*, if a writer wishes to give the effect of "this is as important as an independent statement."

This use is never necessary in school work and is seldom advisable.

**143. RULE.** A semicolon never introduces.

A semicolon must never come after the salutation of a letter, or before a quotation, or after any words like *as follows*.

## GROUP F

### COLON, PARENTHESES, DASHES, BRACKETS, ITALICS

**144. RULE.** Use a colon after the salutation of a letter.

My dear Sir:

Dear George:

**145. RULE.** Use a colon to introduce a list of particulars.

There are three gross errors in this edition: the wrong possessive of *Dickens*, the wrong date of *David Copperfield*, and (on page 167) an unindented paragraph.

**146. RULE.** A colon used before any group of words means "here follows an example or illustration."

One little fact has never had sufficient attention: people who loathe war go to war gladly.

A sentence following a colon may begin with a capital if a writer wishes to indicate "here is the important matter after a mere introduction."

He asked a pertinent question: How can we all be rich if there isn't enough money to go round?

**147. RULE.** Parentheses are used to surround a reference or a bit of information or a pure aside.

Since I have been summoned (by the way, did you know that?), I suppose I must lose my salary here.

The matter between parentheses is punctuated just as it would be anywhere, except that within a sentence it begins with a small letter. No mark of punctuation can normally come before a parenthesis that is within a sentence. The punctuation after a parenthesis is just what would be used if there were no parenthesis.

**148. RULE.** Parentheses must NOT be used to enclose words that a writer wishes to cross out.

**149. RULE.** Dashes may be used to set off any kind of comment or explanation.

a. The punctuation with dashes is just what it would be with parentheses, except in one particular: no mark is put after the second dash.

b. Matter between dashes is often introduced by such parenthetical words as *namely*, *e. g.*, *that is*, which are set off by a comma.

Our reason for fighting the rat here at home—*namely*, that he lives on the same food as man—is the same reason that compelled the men in the trenches to fight him.

Such matter commonly comes last in the sentence, so that only one dash appears.

He is untruthful in both ways—*that is*, he speaks carelessly, and he invents lies.

Note: How dashes have increased in popularity since 1900, displacing parentheses, is illustrated by A. C. Benson's *The Leaves of the Tree*. Though parenthetical matter is frequent in his style, he uses parentheses only five times in 454 pages; he uses dashes frequently.

**150. RULE.** Use a dash before and a comma after such introducing words as *namely* and *that is*.

**151. RULE.** A dash is used to show an unexpected turn of thought or a break in construction.

But I don't want the little chaps—not at first.

His table, his desk, his cupboard, his chairs—all were loaded with books.

**152. RULE.** A double-length dash (with no period following) is used to show that a speaker's sentence is interrupted.

"When I got to forty," I heard him whisper, "I was——" But the rest was inaudible.

**153. RULE.** Brackets are used in a quotation to enclose any words that are not the author's.

"So here is the *terminus ad quem* [i.e., the end] of the book."

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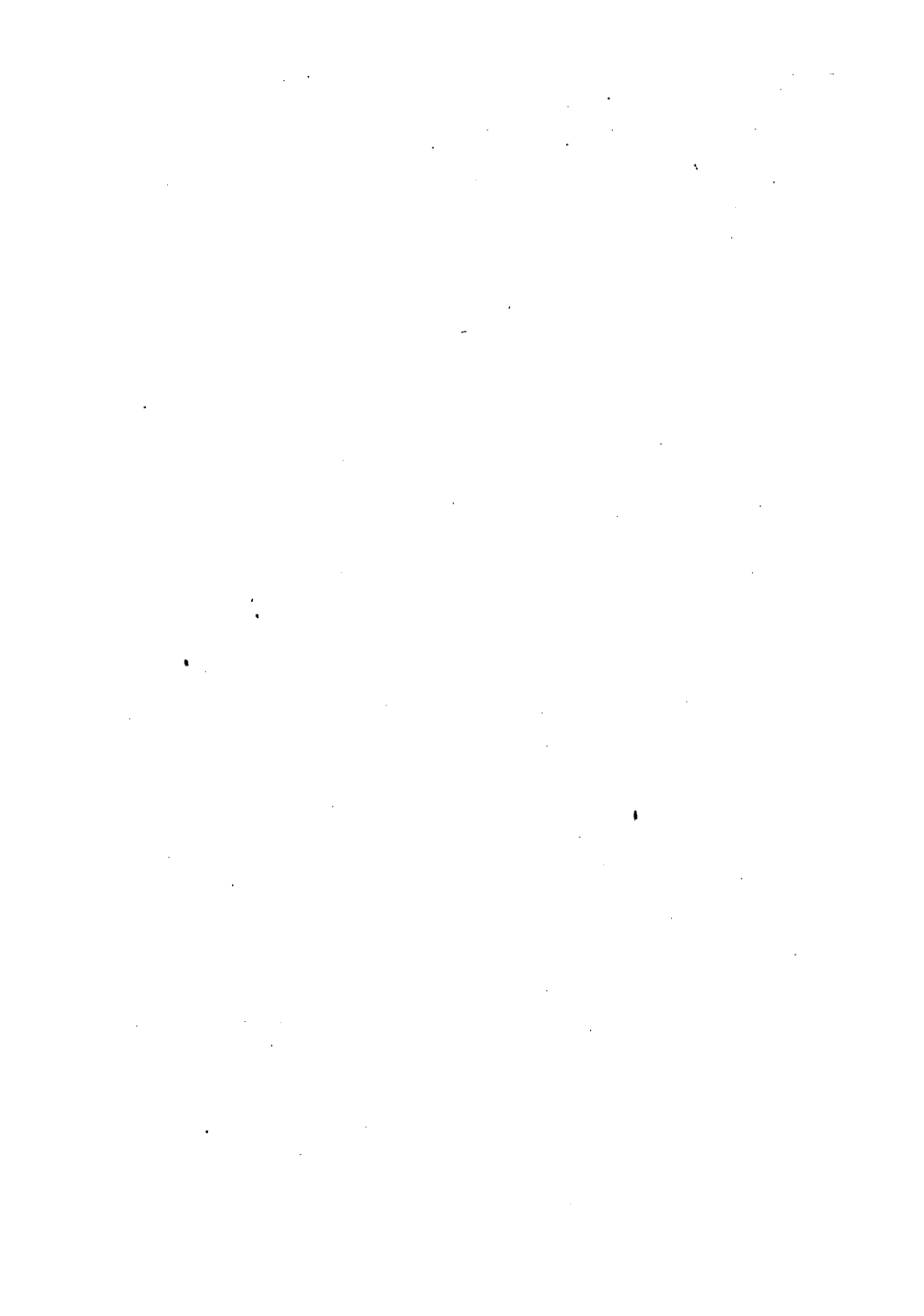
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